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... POEMS OF ...
HUMAN PROGRESS

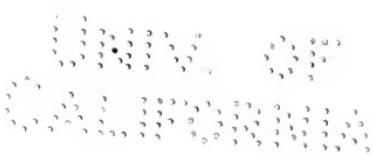
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**POEMS OF HUMAN
PROGRESS**





"Fragrance of clover, coolness in the deeps,
Beneath low branches where the long grass creeps,
And most of all, the high horizon's rim,
Where cloudy summits, swathed in beauty, swim."

— *Frontispiece* — Page 272

UPLIFTS OF
POEMS OF HUMAN
PROGRESS

AND OTHER PIECES: INCLUDING ONE HUNDRED
AND FIFTEEN SONNETS

BY

JAMES HARCOURT WEST

AUTHOR OF "UPLIFTS OF HEART AND WILL," "THE COMPLETE LIFE,"
"IN LOVE WITH LOVE," "THE NINTH PARADISE," ETC.

With Four Illustrations



BOSTON
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“ Fragrance of clover, coolness in the deeps
Beneath low branches where the long grass creeps,
And most of all, the high horizon’s rim,
Where cloudy summits, swathed in beauty, swim.”
— *Frontispiece*

“ How blest are they whose feet these slopes ascend,
Where Thought and Brotherhood together blend ! ”
— *Facing page 4*

“ ‘ Come out and visit us ! ’ the Blue Hills call :
‘ From Rattle Rock or Chickatawbut scaled
See leagues of undulating glory spread ! ’ ”
— *Facing page 181*

“ Full many a placid hour
Beside your edge I ’ve strayed,
And many a sylvan bower
Has Fancy there displayed.”
— *Facing page 292*

PROEM

PROEM

*Revolve, O Earth ! You cannot whirl
And in your pathway not unfurl
Rare canvases of sky and sea
And glowing faces, greeting me.*

*You too revolve, my circling rhyme !
Not yours the art defying Time,
Yet canvases of love you show,
Where troubled hearts for rest may go.*

*Flow on, thou Ocean at my door !
Not here alone your billows roar,
But 'mid the ice of Arctic seas
And round the shining Cyclades.*

*Flow too, my verse, in mobile tide !
On Being's billows rise and ride.
Not yours to thunder round the Poles,
But haply you may freshen souls.*

*In beauty bloom, O tasseled Corn
And Wheatlands that the West adorn !
The sunlight's kisses crown your head
And you supply the world with bread.*

*O soul's high uplands where I plant !
Life's simples are your harvest scant.
Happy if seekers in your hills
Find herbs for healing human ills.*

THE SPIRIT OF SONG

*Raptured by the Springtime Muse,
Do the robins “will” to sing ?
Do the meadow-sparrows “choose”
When their liquid notes shall ring ?
Nay, the lilt is in their heart,
And the strains unbidden start.*

*Song, thou soul’s divine estate,
Hold me ever at thy call !
Left in silence, glad I wait ;
Used, I render thee my all.
Humble is my homely lyre —
Thou the spirit, thou the fire.*

POEMS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

I

MAN'S TRIUMPH - ERA

Read at Tufts College, June 18, 1906, at the meeting
of the Delta Chapter of Massachusetts,

PHI BETA KAPPA

* *

[The poem depicts a walk with college men, with discourse on
human progress]

Φιλοσοφία Βίου Κυβερνήτης

“*Philosophy (Wisdom) the guide of life*”



POEMS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

I. MAN'S TRIUMPH-ERA

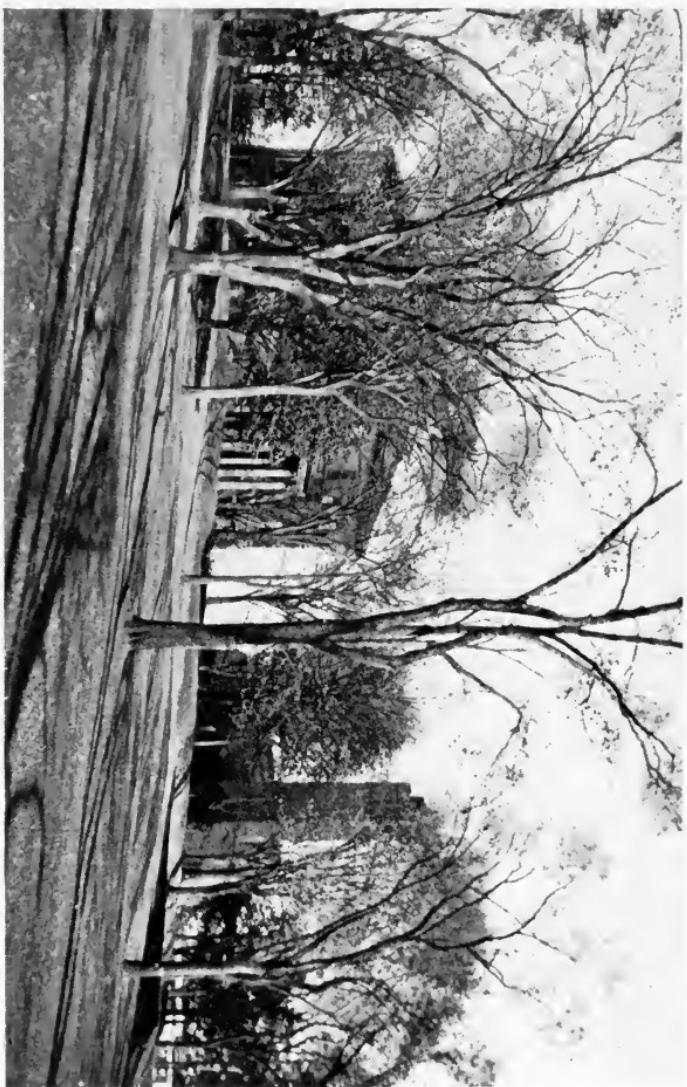
MAN'S TRIUMPH - ERA

I

Hail, scenes and faces of my youth's delight !
And you no less, friends newer to my sight ;
For all are one, in heart and wish and will,
Who ever came in faith to College Hill.

How blest are they whose feet these slopes ascend,
Where Thought and Brotherhood together blend !
Where Knowledge lures the mind to highest reach,
While Friendship binds the seekers each to each.
Knowledge alone is but an Arctic dame ;
She needs the ardor of Affection's flame,
The fertile warmth which nurtures scope and plan,
Ere she shall minister her wealth to man.
Put well your knowledge to some frequent use, —
The Alpine blossom yields its saving juice ;
Cherish your brothers in the daily stress, —
The calculus uncovers a caress.

'T was thus I dreamed in years when life was young ;
For this no less to-day I find a tongue.
Required to sing on Learning's sacred ground,
What higher strain could loyal minstrel sound !



“How blest are they whose feet these slopes ascend,
Where Thought and Brotherhood together blend !”

— Facing page 4

II

I thank you, brothers, for this honor given !
Had I, ambitious, for distinction striven,
A higher honor I had scarcely sought
Than this which freely to my hand you brought.
It is not now as in the days of old,
When godlike Homer wove his cloth of gold,
Or Pindar, for admiring throngs around,
Made Nature vocal with alluring sound.
The warrior and the senator found then
Their rest and recreation in the pen,
And highest honors of the hall and State
Were his who had the genius to create.

Swayed by the magic muse of Sophocles,
Men hailed him messenger of Heaven's decrees.
The ardor of a mind-exultant day
Awoke in him a soul-exalting lay,
In which, forever, Justice found a tongue,
And gods from men their evil impulse wrung.
No joy or rage he sang with tuneful art
But found an echo in the human heart.

Let Æschylus but offer to recite,
A crowd hung breathless till the shades of night.
O time-long tragedy ! — the life of good,
Which vainly struggled to be understood,
Yet, baffled by the ignorance of man,
So often held him under cruel ban !
But eager multitudes enraptured heard,
And felt forgiven as by some Heavenly Word.

Simonides but raised his voice to sing,
 A score had laurels in their hands to fling,
 And all his audience arose as one
 To thunder plaudits when his verse was done.
 Happy the poet bringing rhymes to-day
 Whose hearers do not rise — to run away !

III

Yet not to Poesy — to man's own heart
 The doom, if earnestness from earth depart !
 For Song is Earnestness ! is Vital Force !
 Its lightning flashes from the Primal Source ;
 And robed in phrase of beauty, sweet and high,
 It lifts man's spirit to its native sky.
 It dies when pettiness or thirst for power
 Usurps inglorious the spirit's dower ;
 Life's outward luxury — divine as means —
 Is sordid end, and to decadence leans.
 Time was, New England gloried in her choir
 Of poet-prophets of divinest fire ;
 America again shall burst to song
 When she again exalts the right o'er wrong,
 The permanent o'er transient, — golden joys
 Of lasting greatness o'er its poor alloys.
 No greatness gleams where verse in thought is bound
 And bards content themselves with form and sound.

The singers who have held the world in awe
 Chose mighty themes ! They sought the secret law
 Which binds men to the highest, and their strife
 Revealed the oneness of that law with Life.

The singers of the early Attic line
Struck oft a chord less human than divine.
The drama of man's tragic earthly fate,
The love of love, an awful hate of hate,
A yearning death's dark mystery to scan,
The overbrooding of the gods with man,
Life's deep despair, hope's strife magnanimous,
The vulture and the chains on Caucasus,—
Love ever dragging stones up slippery hills,
Yet good triumphant at the last o'er ills,—
The groping soul in labyrinth of doubt,
Yet faithful to the clue which leads it out,—
Thus sang and strove the giant poets then,
And justified the ways of God to men.
To-day no more we lift that heathen rod,
But justify the ways of men to God !

IV

The seer alone shall sing ! his word has worth
In measure as it rarefies the earth.
O Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson !
By right divine your deathless fame ye won !
O Lowell, Whitman, Emerson ! your brows
Were lofty with the truth ye did espouse !
Freedom and justice — brotherhood — your call ;
No thought of self was yours, but thought of all ;
And endless as the ages is their fame
Who dare for truth the world's repulse and shame.
This is the touch, the test the Muses bring
To venturing spirit who aspires to sing :—

What bliss wilt thou forego, what danger dare,
 What nakedness and ignominy share
 To give thee insight, wisdom, make thee ripe
 To blow upon Apollo's tuneful pipe ?
 That soul alone who shareth mortal woe
 Triumphant up Parnassus' heights shall go ;
 That spirit only which hath felt the fire
 Can fan a flame to make the world aspire.

v

No less our rare To-day than epochs gone
 May sound the poet's call, " Come up and on ! "
 The world from gloom of a material age
 Is sweeping to a sunlit heritage.
 O humble who would strike immortal lyre,
 Ascend Prometheus-like and seize your fire !

There is a spirit in the air to-day
 Which cries, " Return ! Resume the righteous way ! "
 The broader universe which now men know
 Seemed bent at first men's faith to overthrow.
 With faith and fear went consciousness of right,
 But they have found false freedom but a blight.
 Though sundered from the dogmas of the past,
 They find the soul's high dignity holds fast.
 They learn that liberty is not despite, —
 That freedom is but freedom in the right.
 Again they know that good has power to bless ;
 Integrity is still the one success.

The mighty problem which confronts men now
 Is Knowledge with devotion to endow.

High work has science ; this is harder, higher :—
New insight with old reverence to inspire !

The creeds of ignorance can ne'er return ;
Their imaged woes in their own torment burn ;
But the high temper of their authors' souls
Must color and inflame our finer goals.

A lofty lie may lofty fruitage bear
If lofty spirits give it sun and air ;
But truth itself shall fail of saving might
If halting followers neglect its light.

One sacred highway opens for man's feet :
The path of Truth : through flowers — through dust
and heat.

One deathless passion sanctifies his heart :
To do the Right, and never from it part.

VI

The Truth ? — the Right ? — are these so hard
to find ?

Are men so godlike, yet forever blind ?

A scholar sought to know where truth might lie,
That he might follow it ere called to die.
Through all the weary wilderness of books
He wandered, as a child by running brooks.
No ancient shrines or monuments he missed,
Nor peaks Himalayan, all sunrise-kissed,
Where Meditation dreamed and mystics dwelt.
Whatever China taught or Egypt felt
He made his own ; and Babylon and Greece
Lent sculptured fantasy and golden fleece.

Through all the French philosophers he sought,
 With German metaphysics patient wrought ;
 And Spencer, Darwin, Dolbear, Royce, and James
 In his long studies were familiar names.

One summer twilight, still he delved and dreamed,
 Though far as ever from the truth he seemed ;
 And while, through open door, came insects' hum,
 He wrote this sonnet of the Pendulum :—

THE PENDULUM

Nature, in thy glad temple, to and fro,
 Ever the pendulum of beauty swings ;
 Summer or winter, spring or autumn, brings
 Rapture of eye where'er we turn or go.
 Dawn-dew, the virtue of the sunrise-glow,
 The grasses' strength, the spruces' freshening rings,
 Fall's smokeless flame, white wreaths December
 flings, —
 Largess of beauty gods might joy to know.
 Surely, O Nature, thine no mocking bloom !
 Vibrates thy pendulum not aimlessly, —
 An order meaningless, — a dial-less clock !
 Yet where revolve thy hands that point our doom ?
 And how through ages is rewound thy key ?
 No answer greets us though we knock and knock.

Before him open on the table lay
 In Greek the volume wherein day by day

He pondering read of one whose soul was set
To raise the world above consuming fret ;
A soul that found in lilies of the field
A promise of the beauty life should yield
To every seeker who with simple heart
Embraced the good and bade the ill depart.

The Greek he loved, and in it daily read ;
It seemed a living language, not a dead.
And yet its meaning did not live for him ;
It oft seemed desultory, vague, and dim.
He did not dig into its heart to find
The secret hidden there, but read as blind.
So read he now, perceiving not its grace,
Nor knowing that it wore a seraph's face.
“What meaning,” cried he, “can this mystery bear ?”
Then scanned again the wonder written there :

“*Tí ξητεῖτε τὸν ξῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν;*”

“ ‘T is of a piece,’ he said, “with all my search
Through dim philosophy and dimmer Church,
Through science, dogmas, ancient pagan lore,
Old Eastern dream and Western logic’s store ;—
It all resolves itself at last to haze,
And leaves the seeker wandering in a maze.”

Poor foolish scholar ! asking still the same
Old foolish questions without end or aim !
Happy, the drawing night approached in calm,
And wrapped the earth and him in slumber’s balm.

While now in dreams he wandered, worn with
thought,
A sudden glow descended, and he caught
A vision of a bright angelic form,
As mellow as the sunlight after storm.
The apparition smiled,— serene his look,—
And laid his angel finger on the book ;
Then scanned with love the scholar and the page,
And read aloud the dream of Syrian age,—
The very words at which the scholar stopped
Ere wearily in sleep his head he dropped :

“Τί ξητεῖτε τὸν ξῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν;”

“Your search,” the Angel said, “has here its end !
This heavenly trope becomes your guide and friend !
Upon this vine hang grapes in rich excess
Which each new age for wine of life must press.
The letter killeth,” said the Angel bright ;
“The spirit giveth unimagined light.
Forget the time and scene that spake the word,
As ye neglect the plumage of a bird
When song ecstatic ripples on the air,
Its melody a medicine for care.
Ye strive for truth in dreams of ages fled :
‘*Why seek ye for the living 'mid the dead !*’
What if the secret in that phrase should be —
Seck not for truth in old futility !
‘Seek not the living where repose the dead’—
Seek not in crypts and catacombs for bread,

Seek not the dawn in darkened sunset sky,
 Seek not for flame where only ashes lie.
 The living dwell not where the dead repose :
 Only the beetle to such feasting goes.
 Rest not thine eye on graves, but rather scan
 Some living world where waits some living man.
 Grind not forever the Past's mouldy bones ;
 The Present offers hot electric stones
 From out whose contact — if his aid man lend —
 Burst rays of energy earth's woes to end.
 Not by the starry reckonings of the Past
 The course of current destiny is cast.
 No act or thought of yesterday can say
 To present need, 'I am the truth, the way.'
 Each sun that rises draws its heavenly rill,
 And adds to human insight, wish, and will.
 The truth comes nearest in each latest deed
 Where earth is helped, or they are raised who bleed."

When morning, robed in iridescent light,
 Made hill and tree a rapture to the sight,
 The scholar rose and looked upon the earth,
 His soul exuberant with holy mirth.
 The blossom he had sought so far away
 He found a-bloom in his own heart that day :—

In the Present's need and beauty
 Find the Present's truth and good ;
 Only in its present duty
 Shall the Now be understood.

VII

How beautiful is youth which sets its heart
To know earth's needs — and takes the righteous part !
O you once young with me ! — and ever young ! —
How sweet those vanished seasons when we flung
Our flag of eager search to truth's free sky,
And vowed its ministry to magnify !
These slopes to which fond memory oft returns
Were then our Horeb ! — (Moses' bush still burns !) —
And all the wide horizon round about
Was Holy Ground, and we its priests devout.
How oft, in dear dead days no more to be,
Yon hills and waters lured us forth in glee
To seek enchantment such as sailors find
When up the streams of some new world they wind !
Columbus nor Vespucci ever knew
More marvels than before our footsteps grew :
Lakes, pathless forest-ways, the rocky dome
Of crumbling hills where blue-bells had their home,
And pines and hemlocks which in shady grove
Implored us, " Rest, belov'd ! no longer rove ! "
Boughs which, when we departed, gave us bloom
Freely to decorate our evening room ; —
Nor ever ours Macbeth's despairing thrill
When Stoneham woods should come to College Hill,
But rather, rare delight that in our arm
We bore the leaves for every earthly harm.

Yet ne'er we journeyed on that frequent walk
Simply to wander. Nay, we went to talk.

Nor yet alone to talk, but also think,
Determined not Thought's utmost isle to shrink.
O mind of youth, how large thy thoughts and wide !
What though Tradition may thy dreams deride,
Let no professor think he shall confine
In four-walled class-room search for the divine !
Not in books only of the mouldering Past —
In living souls the melodies that last !
So forth we wandered — youths on errands bent :
The "Father's business" which is never spent.
"Come, Frank ! come, Rufus ! let us walk to-day !" "
That call, who heard and ever answered "Nay" ?

I pause and ponder. Fain my eyes would look
Again upon each face as on a book.
Once more I mingle with that eager band ! —
In thought I greet them, — take each friendly hand.
O magic art that summons vanished joys,
Through thee I hail again the old-time boys !

VIII

THE OLD-TIME BOYS

O brothers, give a moment's dream
To sacred seasons gone ;
Again catch evanescent gleam
Of Joe and Will and John.

How many are the years between,
With hopes that rose and sank !

But naught can our affection wean
From Ez and Rob and Frank.

Brave comrades ! some have tamed the air,
Some spanned the mountain gorge ;
We love to see the natives stare
At deeds of Sam and George.

Tread softly ! some are lying low
Within their grassy bed ;
All dewy are the flowers we throw
To slumbering Dick and Ned.

A thousand still earth's bubbles chase
As years successive fall ;
The prizes — are they worth the race
To Steve and Gus and Paul ?

A score are wise professors now
Who once seemed dull as we !
We doff our hats to Tom, and bow, —
He 's now a Ph.D.

A host, with tireless pen and brain,
Have wrought for truth and man.
'T is well ! — for us they still remain
Just Eb and Rube and Dan.

To grow so great, upon what meat
Hath this our Cæsar fed !

Of old, who dreamed such lofty seat
Would be attained by Fred ?¹

A modest glow may likewise thrill
Your bard of transient fame ;—
Upreared upon this honored Hill
One Hall embalms his name !²

But, comrades, mainly 't is the strength,
The loyal works and lives,
Of silent sons, by which at length
A fostering mother thrives.

Be sure, O who in quiet ways
Still honor Tufts by deeds,
That youths as endless as the days
Shall still supply her needs.

Still fresh, on Oval and in halls,
As time its passage treads,
Shall rise, when Alma Mater calls,
Her answering Johns and Eds.

IX

But, brothers, now, in thought of other years,
On one glad walk to-day be my compeers !
Those rovings of our youth-time come not back ;—
Nor, came they, could we take the selfsame track !

¹ At that time the President of Tufts College. ² West Hall!

The cherished groves which lured our youthful feet,
The scenes where soul found contemplation sweet,
Have vanished ; and through hillside, field, and fen
Wind busy highways now, for busy men.

With changing generations and new days
Change also paths where men's ambition strays.
The waking world learns riches cannot take
The place of honor, nor its loss remake.
Our boasted age its "golden standard" had,
But holds its standard now but money-mad.
If one had genius, that was very well —
If it enabled him to buy and sell.
Worth still the man did make, and crowned the
earth ; —
But it must be a million dollars' worth.
The wind blows east, and then the wind blows west ;
The wind of virtue speeds man's shallop best.

Come, Tom ! come, Harry ! walk a mile with me ! —
The earth has gold no sordid eye can see :
It lies beside the common road — the way
Where buttercups flash open to the day
And lily-lips reach up to drink the sky
And daisy-fields in wind-swept furrows lie.
It dwells in simple thought and simple heart,
Forsaking care to find the better part.
Why mumble dust before one's time, I say !
The dust will come full soon, and come to stay.

The twilight falls ! the whip-poor-will
 His note is calling ;
And all the air — no moment still —
Is vibrant with the pulsing thrill
Of crickets, spelling field and hill
 With sound incessant, rising, falling, —
Fit chorus for the whip-poor-will,
 Still calling, calling.

O you who in these classic hives
 Find soul-exalting toil,
Remember those whose dusty lives
 Are mured in thankless moil.

Pierian spring for you ne'er fails ! —
 Their dream no culture decks
Whose only knowledge comes in bales,
 Whose lore is drafts and checks.

No time is theirs the clouds to scan
 Or hear the robin calling ;
They've only time for sifting bran
 And keeping stocks from falling.

On nights so still that field and tree,
 And even breezes, listen,
Oh, who will walk a mile with me
 To watch Orion glisten ?

Forever must we ape the bee ?
 Forever seek but honey ?

Oh, who will walk a mile with me
 To *lose* a little money !

x

With thought of earth as more than golden ball,
 Come dreams of sharing planet-wealth with all.

The race — for ages blind with mental lack,
 And bent with woes of brutehood on its back —
 At length uplifted eyes to greet the stars,
 Spurned its low levels, burst all hindering bars,
 Stood upright, knew itself at last as Man,
 With godlike powers to hew and build and plan.

When once he spoke, the victory was nigh ;
 Speech was his ladder leaning on the sky.
 Each now could work with others ; each could tell
 The thought, the dream, which lured him to excel.
 O magic word, “ Together ! ” — this the charm
 To speed the race beyond the power of harm !

Yet man still clung, still clings to-day, with rage,
 To one fierce instinct of the primal age.
 The tiger in the jungle tears his prey —
 But warns his fellows from the feast away !
 Self, self ! . . . O brother, what does “ brother ” mean ?
 Strength’s ne’er so strong as crying “ Brother, lean ! ”

Is he the anarchist whose hopeful strife
 Affirms the State’s decease Man’s larger life ?
 Is he of law less baleful enemy
 Who law o’er-rides for self-ascendency,
 Or law manipulates with scheme and plan
 To pluck and prostitute his brother-man ?

Who is the baleful socialist ? the wight
Who holds that social righteousness is right,
And dreams earth's general product should provide
A general sustenance, not slip aside ?
The baleful socialist alone is he
Who says " Society exists for Me ! "

Let none believe he gains the spirit's goal
Whose prayer is for his individual soul ;
Nor that his earthly bread is more than stone
Whose mill-wheels rumble for himself alone.
He highest " prosters " whose intents are high,
Not bounded by the bounds of " thou " and " I " ;
He noblest joys who works with Nature's good,
Evolving harmony where chaos stood ;
Who holds the universe a Cosmos sound,
And finds his freedom being nobly bound ;
Who does his part to banish ill from earth,
Transforming ignorance to art and mirth ;
Who asks no cup at Nature's fruitful Fair
Which others may not quaff in equal share ;
Who dreams no heaven of arbitrary grace,
But makes his fellowship the human race.
'T is he I hail as manly man and true ;
His knowledge fits him for time's widest view ;
Philosophy indeed instructs his life, —
He gains its blessing and avoids its strife.

Come, Tom ! come, Reuben ! higher see
Than this or next world's pelf :

Oh, who will walk a mile with me
 To banish dreams of self ?

Come, Frank ! come, Will ! the jubilee
 Of ages sounds its call !
 Oh, who will walk a mile with me
 To give himself for all !

XI

Oh, June delight ! Oh, miracle each day
 Which points our path and signals us away !
 The piled luxuriance of pink and white
 Where orchards lately bloomed, a holy sight,
 Is now transformed to bowers of densest green,
 Where swelling fruits expand each day unseen.
 This wealth unreckoned is our Mother's store,
 Who never paints "No Trespass" on her door.

Who first called Nature "Mother"? In his soul
 The partial vanished in the larger Whole!
 A mother feeds her child with smiles and songs;—
 No less her milk unto her babes belongs!

A lavish Mother has each son of Earth,
 And sky and flower and mountain make him mirth.
 No less her fruits, and every hidden wealth
 Which warms and nurtures him and brings him health,
 Belong to him by equal right divine
 With airs that circulate and suns that shine.
 A mother lifts not one, thrusts others down,—
 For one a kiss, for one a niggard frown;
 Each hungering child receives his needful share,

And drinks her being as he drinks the air,
While all her children she in turn would call
To share with each as she herself with all.
What son were he, by food maternal blest,
Who turned and pushed his brother from the breast !

A single portion of our own fair land,
The State where swings the Gulf's prolific strand,
'T is said could furnish in its fertile space
Abundant food for all the human race.
Unfed ? Unsheltered ? Children pinched and white ?
A million prattlers crying in the night ?
Unnumbered women toiling beyond strength
For just an unknown resting-place at length ?
Redemptive genius fettered by the chains
Which bind its energies to earthly planes ?
Rare souls aspiring like prophetic stars,
Yet cramped by poverty's unyielding bars ?
Earth charged with force to fill all right desires,
And men not daring to connect the wires ?

Resolved : that Nature's bounty is for Man ! —
For all enough, for none neglect or ban.
Resolved : for Mother's babes is Mother's breast ! —
A cupboard and a couch in one dear nest.

There is a glory dawning for the race !
Each passing year adds beauty to its face,
Each year adds richer lustre to its eye,
Each year the heart can feel it drawing nigh.
As yet, we fathom not its shape or hue,
But it shall vivify mankind like dew,

And add transcendent grace and loftier worth
To virtue, toil, and genius of the earth.

Our Mother hails us ! Comrades,—women, men !—
All ye who honor her ! with voice and pen
Do *something*—loftily — from day to day
To bring the year for which the nations pray,
When none of needed bounty shall go bare,
But all in Nature's wealth have ample share.

How shall we put our knowledge best to use ?—
By freeing earth from error and abuse.
. Cherish your brothers in the daily stress, —
The calculus uncovers a caress.

The Mother sings sweet lullaby ;
Her love would banish moan.
Oh, who will walk a mile with me
To bring to Man his own ?

And not America alone is ours
To lift to beauty and adorn with flowers.
Love fails which circles land and kin alone ;
Its lines must reach to farthest race and zone.
Earth's wine must flow and pity's accents plead
Not less for Congo's good than Belgium's need ;¹
The right must rule, love lisp its sweet "Bismillah,"
No surer in New England than Manila.²

¹ The date of this poem was the period of the Congo atrocities and (²) of the Philippine controversy.

How shall our "love of wisdom" guide our lives? —¹
 By nursing prostrate justice till it thrives.
 Put well your knowledge to some frequent use,—
 The Alpine blossom yields its saving juice.
 The truth comes nearest in each latest deed
 Where earth is helped, or they are raised who bleed.

Man's triumph-era calls, and we
 Should hasten it with song.
 Oh, who will walk a mile with me
 To free the earth of Wrong !
 Of War, and Woe, and Wrong !

XII

Day's lengthening shadows with the twilight blend ;
 Fraternal ramblings all at last have end.

One inspiration let our journey give,
 By which our hearts in hopefulness shall live :
The world grows better! If the paths of wrong
 Seem many, and the road to virtue long,
 This only means that Man's ideals are high,
 And patience needed by who climbs the sky.

Let knowledge grow ; let men discern their power
 To guide and curb the instincts which devour,
 Till all the mighty passion of the race
 Shall tend to helpfulness and health and grace.
 Here on this planet, — Nature's offspring high, —
 Called *anthropos* because he fronts the sky, —

¹ See significance of "Phi Beta Kappa," page 3.

Man's upward look has brought him on his way
From life's deep valley shadows to the day.
And upward, upward still, his feet shall climb,
His eyes still lifted to the hills sublime.

Be ours of all men — claiming, as we do,
Philosophy life's blissful avenue —
To stand with love's rebuke and stalwart arm
Across each path which threatens human harm,
Still lifting high, with faith that never halts,
The flame which human destiny exalts ;
Till hoping, longing nations, near and far,
All rise and follow when they see the star.

POEMS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

II

THE EPIC OF MAN

Read at the Forty-first Annual Convention and
Festival of the Free Religious Association
of America, Boston, May 29, 1908

* *

[The Free Religious Association of America was founded in 1867 as an affirmation of breadth in the interpretation of religion. Its first recorded member was Ralph Waldo Emerson. Among its Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Directors have been Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Julia Ward Howe, George William Curtis, Lucretia Mott, Moncure D. Conway, Isaac M. Wise, Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Frederick Douglass, Frank Sanborn, Edwin D. Mead, Jenkin Lloyd Jones, and many others of America's leaders in thought, lovers of Freedom, and believers in Man.]

POEMS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

II. THE EPIC OF MAN

THE EPIC OF MAN

I

In these rare days just mellowing into June
One theme alone could form a poet's rune ;—
The theme of growth, of springing life from death,
Of Man each year inhaling holier breath.
Of Man, then, let me sing, this festal hour,—
His might, his wisdom, and his glorious dower.

II

When human soul first knew itself as soul,
It did not feel its wondrous power its own ;
Outreaching to embrace the mighty whole
Men dreamed the air with gods and demons sown.
“ Our deeds and speech are not our own,” said they ;
“ We speak and act as Jove—or Brahm—may sway.
If Yahweh curse, we sink beneath his frown ;
As gods approve, so go we up or down.”

But cycles wheeled, and as his vision grew
Man found himself far greater than he knew.

He found that he himself, in human line,
Partakes of, and expresses, the divine.
“ Yourselves are gods ! ” was Nature’s urging call,—
“ Not wind-swept weeds upon a crumbling wall ! ”

Thus all things were transformed — for those who
saw ;

For those who recognized deep Nature’s law.
The multitude might still for ages bend,—
As still to-day, — and prayers with incense blend ;
But as for those who caught the gleam divine,
In freedom’s birthright they would rise and shine ;
The universe’s forces they would ride,
Life’s evils they would learn to set aside,
And as their might and wisdom gained in grace,
So loftier should rise the human race.
Their fellows might not see — might fear to try
To grasp the thunderbolts which shook the sky ;
Might even crucify or strangle those
Who for their brambles offered them a rose ;
But for each upward step which man has taken,
Some god or devil from his throne was shaken,
Until at last — as latest prophets see —
A natural world awaits man’s husbandry,
And Sinai’s now with this new “ Table ” shine :—
“ THE NATURAL ALONE IS THE DIVINE.”

III

The beauty of the world still glows
 As when the eye first caught the rose.
 Nay ! fairer is the beauty now,
 Since human hands have held the plow.

Across the heavens the spectral arch
 Beheld by Aryans on their march
 Is wonderful no less to-day
 Than in the primal epochs. Nay,
 A hundredfold its grace has grown
 Since man its cause has seen and shown.

The whip of fire which lashed the skies
 And scourged with terror ancient eyes,
 To-day is man's most helpful force —
 His voice, his arm, his tireless horse.

So magic of the human mind
 For man's behoof doth all things bind.
 The crab has burst to luscious fruit,
 The fangs are stricken from the brute,
 The cactus blossoms for his meat,
 The desert smiles a garden sweet.

And soul — unfathomed heights of soul
 Are yet to brighten, Pole to Pole !
 The ignorance of man shall cease,
 The deeper things which bring him peace

Shall spring from out the crudeness now,
And bind sereneness on his brow.

The things that perish shall no longer
In his high purpose be the stronger,
And all that makes for strength and beauty
Shall be with him his happy duty.

IV

O patient, eager race ! still seeking out
Through years — through centuries — the Way of
Life !

Vouchsafed no revelation but the pain
Of error's consequence, no saviour but the joy
Of strict conformity to Nature's scheme ;
The deeds that mar, the forces that retard —
These learning to avoid ; the deeds that build
And bring to beauty, and transform the brute
To angel's guise — these following as gleams
That point the traveler to rest and peace.

Existence, then, resolves at last to this :
That men and nations sink to depths of woe,
Or rise to blessing, in exact degree
That Nature's boundless forces are ungrasped
And disobeyed — or loftily sought out
And loftily pursued to finest ends.
For at the heart of all is core of good,
And only good can bless or bring to life,
And following good is all the Way of Peace.

O simple scheme! to seek and know the way
 And walk in it which bringeth human good!
 And this is man's chief end — no tangled scheme
 Of brain-wrought fantasy, in ignorance born,
 Upspringing in the years when Nature's ways
 Were undiscerned, uncared for, or opposed; —
 But loving search and high obedience.

v

What universal powers uplift man's life
 Work but through man himself; — no power outside,
 Without his high, co-operative zeal,
 Exalts him or brings larger loveliness,
 Or eases pain, or lessens any woe.
 High voice thus opes to man's interior ear,
 And bids him bring, himself, on earth, the joy
 For which through ages he in vain has sought
 Uplifting hands of prayer imploringly!

Still pray for peace and still rear battle-ships?
 Nay, brothers, if ye long for beauteous peace,
 Beseech no more the seven-fold silent heavens
 While still up-piling armaments of death;
 But you yourselves bring peace — by brotherhood!
 Since brothers' dawn 't is brotherhood which aye
 For brothers hath wrought magic loveliness —
 And so shall be till all mankind are one.

The blossoms which in Maytime flood the peach,
 Till it reveals a fragrant glory-zone
 Prophetic of the luscious fruit to be,

Are not more beautiful than brothers' love,
Nor surer prophecy of sun-kissed fruit.

But should the peach-tree, in its springtime glow,
Make wanton with its marvel of delight —
Possessed it power to use its bursting bloom
As missiles only, for companions' woe —
What wreck of might ! what harvest unfulfilled !

Behold ! a coming harvest-time of good
When man's sweet promise is not wantoned more !

What sting or grief, my brothers, would remain,
What rare delight would languish unfulfilled,
If men themselves should but arise supreme,
In high co-operation each with each ?

VI

While Nature smiles on every vale and steep,
Do children starve and willing workers weep ?
Do women in their misery despair,
And birth their babes where rabbits would not lair ?
While Earth, with welcome of rich fruit and grain,
Bids all to plenteous comfort to attain,
Do some, by wrong of circumstance or greed,
Make life a luxury through others' need ?

Rejoice ! the happy hour of clearer sight
Is coming, when the rule shall be of Right ;
When none shall eat unless he also work,
And none shall wish his rightful task to shirk,
And none shall toil until his soul is dull
And shut from prospect of the beautiful,

But work and leisure in their proper part
Shall bring, for all, rich happiness of heart.
The weeds of selfish sloth and cramping need
Shall wither in the growths from sweeter seed ;
Then woman's equal worth shall be confessed,
Her equal toils with equal prize be blest ;
Disease shall vanish, and destroying lust
To mouldering Caves of the Outgrown be thrust
By simpler living and a loftier aim,
Born of the might which soul may ever claim
By drinking at the mighty springs of power
Which throb around us as our natural dower.

The mighty Presence which involves us all —
Each human soul, each whirling, skyey ball ;
Which thrills through all, and lifts from crude to fair ;
The Mystery unsolved, yet which doth bear
In its deep bosom balm for all our strife,
The Fountain, and the Ocean, of our life, —
We never nearer than to-day may reach
To grasp its secret for our futile speech,
But ever deeper, Man shall enter in
To use it, and its grace of being win.

Be this enough ! it is our heaven of hope,
And Life Eternal is to climb its slope.
No outer miracle shall bring it near,
Though sought by man in love or sought in fear ;
But Man himself must gain the sunlit height,
And share with every soul its air and light.

VII

Is this the Church's work ?¹ — I do not know !
 But 't is the only way the world shall grow.
 If still the Church upon man's side would be,
 It needs but open clearer eyes and see.
 The Church may do it, or may fail to do,
 But Man shall do it — helped by me and you.

Oh, happy opportunity ! to share
 In making life thus beautiful and fair !
 You men and women of this race divine,
 Your light amid dispersing gloom let shine !
 Let not the Past's unwisdom shape To-day !
 Rebuke the thought which in the gloom would stay !
 Whatever gods may be beyond our ken
 Are highest served by serving fellow men ;
 Whatever demons people lowest hell
 Are fastest chained by human doing well.

Be ours to smile, to sing, to work for good,
 To know that Justice cannot be withheld,
 To know that Right shall yet illumine the earth —
 IF WE OURSELVES BUT GIVE IT GLORIOUS BIRTH.

VIII

Sing, voices of all birds that trill in June !
 Your dear delight
 Is symbol of the high ecstatic tune,

¹ The general topic at the Convention at which this poem was read was The Work of the Church To-day.

The radiance bright,
Which shall encompass Man full soon — full soon !

Shine, rays of myriad suns that gleam on high !
Your glorious flame
Is prophecy of lumined earthly sky,
Known now in name,
And shortly to be made sweet verity !

Rise, human hearts ! too long, too long opprest
By forces crude !
The shackles spurn which leave you still unblest
Though born to good,
And after ages' weeping, enter rest !

POEMS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

III. MISCELLANEOUS

ACCELERANT

I

For evil or for good we live each day;
Accelerant the good or ill speeds on.
Brothers and sisters! ere earth's hours be gone
What will ye answer while the nations pray?

II

His dream was some high gift to Coming Time.
But he was powerless — what great deed could he!
Modest in name and mien, his mind was free
And his heart willing. Was there aught sublime?

Temptation came to him. He did not lack
The taint of blood from old heredity
Urging him — spelling him. Yet valiantly
On the alluring ill he turned his back.

Later came one he loved, and they were wed.
His children had far less the taint abhorred,

While mind and will were trebly in them scored.
They led the world on after he was dead.

III

Unto himself alone no man may live ;
Accelerant his strength or weakness grows,
In blessing or in curse, where'er it flows.—
To coming ages what wilt thou, friend, give ?

TO A BABY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Coming like the morning star
From unfathomed realms afar ;
Flower of mingled sowings vast
In the generations past ;
Promise of a strength and peace
Which shall day by day increase,—
Baby ! heir of all the earth
Art thou, by thy very birth !

Never in a happier day
Came a child on earth to stay :
All the comforts toil has wrought,
All the beauty art has brought,
Grace of every poet's song,—
All to thee by right belong ;

While each year now counts as ten
In new benefits to men.

Walking where the light allures,
Wisdom, little one ! be yours
To distill in coming years
Further balm for human fears,
Adding thy few hopeful grains
To the harvest Love attains,
Leaving earthly paths more sweet
In the passing of thy feet.

ALPHA AND OMEGA

[1886]

Dim in the dark Æonian caves,
Deep in the Night of earliest Time,
There trembled low beneath the waves
A mimic protoplasmic sphere,—
A globule small, whose curve severe
Bore in its heart a germ sublime.

Naught else in all the universe
Such germ possessed as glowed in this ;
A germ whose warmth would soon disperse
The gloom which bound earth's silent corse :
The germ sublime of deathless Force ! —
Earth's mystery of mysteries.

Lichens and moss now found a place —
 Or whence or how, what tongue may tell ?
 And ferns and grasses filled the space
 Where erst dull clods and dust had been ;
 While rustling leaves, with lips unseen,
 Called to the Ages, “ All is well.”

Lizards and dragons, monstrous forms,
 Sights that men’s eyes would shrink to see !
 Shrieks above elemental storms ! —
 Ah ! through what pain was life evolved !
 Only through death and conquest solved, —
 Struggle and blood and agony.

But see ! a kindlier hour should come !
 Rapine and force sank, shrinking, low ;
 Thought, invention, showed fairer sum.
 Hither came Man ! — yes, crude indeed,
 But climbing to heart and mind with speed.
 On him the gods their best bestow.

Love, aspiration, — powers sublime !
 Sympathy, help, — these Now have place.
 O for the years of Coming Time ! —
 What shall they bring of better yet ?
 Courage ! not yet man’s sun is set.
 Good is in store for all the race.

UP TO THE HEIGHTS

I dreamed the statue of a god
Stood high in every market-place,
That all who thither toiling trod
Might see the beauty of a face
Noble, and freed in every trace
From want, from selfishness, from sin.
Yet seemed it of the human race,
Nor wholly difficult to win.

Indeed, thrice daily, morn, noon, night,
To all the hurriers to and fro
Each statue spake : "The Cosmos bright,
Each gracious force, above, below,
Earth's possibilities but show !
Man can attain whate'er he feels ;
Up to the heights 't is yours to go ;
Your gods are but your high ideals."

Is this the Vision of the Race ?
This its high nobleness of heart ?
Be ours to win that finer grace,
Ours to do valiantly our part !
Thus from the race's ranks shall start
The sonship truly of the Best,
And Love's divine and perfect art
Henceforth be man's redeeming quest.

WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR?

What are we here for, brothers mine,
 Upon this Road of Life ?
 What mean for us the stars that shine,
 The fields with beauty rife ?
 What power hath truth to stir our zeal ?
 What cry hath human need ?
 'Mid earth's conflicting woe and weal,
 What voices should we heed ?

What are we here for ? Here to grow
 In every grace divine !
 The beauty of the world to know,
 And in its beauty shine ;
 To follow truth where'er it lies,
 Through loneliness and scorn ;
 To hold earth's bounty equal prize
 Of every child that's born.

What are we here for in this maze
 Which no man yet hath solved ?
 Here to achieve the noblest days
 Since first the sphere revolved !
 Not ours to dull the soul with mirth,
 Outdrowning human groan,
 But ours to sublimate the earth
 And bring to Man his own.

THE GREAT

Around me often, when the twilight fades,
Come figures giant-brained, heroic-hearted ;
In ghostly vigil rise the Great Departed,—
Of earth's most valiant-souled the deathless shades.

They stand upon a background glory-walled,
Returned a little from the fields Elysian.
As saw the Tuscan in sublimest vision,
So see I these, and stand enrapt, enthralled.

They move before me with majestic tread,
Alive again ! for me anew-created ;
In mind and figure rehabilitated.
Though gone from earth the Great are never dead.

The Great ? Who are the Great ? From distant
climes,
From years that mould with age and torture's
wailing,
Within my ken a weary host come sailing,—
The grave gives up old "heroes" of old times.

Eastward with pomp, from Macedonia's gate,
Seeking what Asia to his lust might pander,
I see the drunken glutton, Alexander,
Cruel and vicious, gain his laurel, "Great."

Thin-visaged, thundering at earth's western door,
 I see great Julius in Transalpine valleys.
 How flee the Gauls at his majestic sallies !
 How faint they at the fearless front he wore !

Men hail him as he heads his cavalcade, —
 “ O Cæsar ! where the warrior that can match
 you ! ”

But, shivering at the base of Pompey's statue,
 I see the rent the envious Casca made.

Fighter of battles, not in cause of Right,
 But to his kingdom to add lands and oceans,
 Peter of Russia — fertile in high notions,
 Fertile in baseness — ranges into sight.

Near him, great Frederick, Prussia's lofty man,
 Great in his will-power — great in his excesses !
 Little in all that elevates and blesses ;
 Breaker of treaties, liar and charlatan.

The slaughterer of hordes unveils his face —
 Napoleon, the dazzling and tremendous !
 What Power, what Progress, did his blood-reign
 lend us ?
 A ruined country, an impoverished race !

Thus sadly come they — from years old and late —
 A wan, deluded army, vulture-haunted,
 The host a world's mad dream has hero-vaunted,
 Playing their life-part out — “ the brave,” “ the Great.”

Alas ! how little in them all we see
 Of what we call the gracious, the diviner !
 Than all this brutehood is there nothing finer ?
 Oh, turn we where sublimity may be !

Yea, hither, hither come, O Persian Saint,
 O Buddha of Nepaul, O Syrian Jesus !
 No longer deeds of blood and conflict please us ;
 For heights of soul — for love — our spirits faint :

For those who from life's discords brought a tone
 Of richest truth and harmony to greet us ; —
 Pythagoras, Isaiah, Epictetus,
 Saviours in every era, every zone ;

For Seneca, Contentment's messenger ;
 For Socrates, of all souls lofty, breezy ;
 The Nature-lover, Francis of Assizi ;
 Aurelius, the inward ponderer ;

The early scientists of Nile and Greece,
 Our own rare searchers, Humboldt, Darwin,
 Spencer ; —
 Above them all there waves the golden censer
 Whose fragrance stills life's harshnesses to peace.

Yea, those are mortal ; these, immortal ones,
 The world's unselfish, its true blessing-bringers,
 Its painters, sculptors, freedom-lovers, singers,
 Its Shakespeares, Burnses, Lowells, Emersons.

And so of all the myriad "nameless" men,
 The faithful women, lovers of self-giving,
 Who lived for something higher than mere living,
 And, losing, have yet doubly gained again !

These are the heroes men to-day adore,
 These are the valiant ones above all story ;
 This is the pathway to the modern glory
 Which down the years with added power shall pour :

The Greatness that the world shall recognize
 In conquest over all its pain and sinning,—
 The Love which was not at earth's far beginning,
 But now is here, and saves and sanctifies.

NO MORE

No more the world lifts laurel-leaves to crown
 The wielder of the battle-axe and spear.
 The trade that filled the earth with fear
 And robbed the mother of her hard-won prize—
 Her baby with the golden hair and eyes
 Just grown to manhood, fit for fair renown—
 The trade that wrecked with woe
 Wide fields all billowy with ripened grain,
 And turned the rivers' healing flow
 To currents red with wrathful stain—

That trade is passing from the earth.
No longer entered on with mirth,
 War now is known
As thing the most obscene
'Mong all the things terrene ;
 A shame to be outgrown,
Unmasked in all its evil mien ;
And conquerors are but butchers whose red hands
No more triumphant wave through cheering lands,
But nerveless fall at love's divine commands.

THE WAIL OF LOW HUMANITY

[1885]

Ah, whither shall we look, and whither turn ? —
 Life's road is bleak !
About us fiercely wrongs and passions burn :
For fairer destiny our spirits yearn.
Where shall we look ? — ah, whither shall we seek ?
 For we are weak.

Up to the silent heavens in vain we raise
 Our blinded sight.
Men through the ages, through long years and days,
Their supplications fond, in prayer and praise,
 Have raised with looks like ours, and faces white —
 Yet sank in Night.

To You, then, who have fought with Fate like us,
And gained a place!—
Who by no aid or gift miraculous
Have fled the Woe, the Vale Calamitous,
But in Man's natural might alone, and grace,
Have won life's race,—

To You, O Brothers higher up, we turn!
Our human kin!
Lend *ye* the means for us life's heights to earn.
Uplift with love, where now your brows are stern.
Do *ye* o'erturn for us earth's wrong and sin,—
And let us in.

JUSTICE ! FREEDOM !

How shall all mankind be lifted,
Strength be brought to weakness lowly,
Toil's oppression-clouds be rifted,
Right be recognized as holy?

Many eras, many sages,
Life's sublimer words have spoken:
Flee your blood-stained heritages!
Justice! Freedom! — these the token.

COURAGE, O WORKERS!

Blithely the birds in the treetops are shouting their matins.

Hark! do you hear their glad notes — their seraphic rejoicing?

Nay, 't is the winter's gray fields where we toil and endeavor!

Far in the Southland they warble, those orioles splendid:

Give us their olive and palm, their rich tropical splendor,

Give us their warmth and their ease — then our praise theirs shall equal!

Softly the zephyr chants runes through the leaves of the laurel.

Hush! do you feel on your cheeks its caress as it passes?

Nay, 't is a Boreal blast from the caves of the Arctic, Hurling its arrows of sleet, that we feel in our faces!

Somewhere for others — a few — may blow cinnamon breezes;

Not for Man yet as a whole are life's sunny Bermudas.

Up the wide beach curl the crests of the beckoning waters.

Softly they break and submerge the gay circles of bathers

Stretched on the sands or pursuing each other with laughter.

Join in their care-free delight, O my brothers, my comrades !

Nay, through the ice of the ages we strive and go stumbling !

Far from our reach trend the shores of Man's southern Pacific.

Courage, O thinkers ! the systems of men are but transient.

Only the system of Man is unique and forever !

Man is the one, the eternal, the mighty, triumphant !

All that is falsehood he spurns as the centuries hasten,

All that is wrong he outgrows as his vision increases ;

Man is himself of his future the master and builder.

Courage, then, workers ! we strive not in vain in the conflict !

Upward he climbs — the rude man-child his glory discovers !

Truth shall be gained, and mankind through the truth shall be victor.

Not for a few, but for all, are life's heights and life's splendors —

Summits of thought and of will ! of the soul ! of the spirit !

Hasten, O earth, to Equality, Brotherhood, Freedom !

GOOD SHALL CONQUER, NEVER FEAR

[Tune, "Triumph By-and-by"]

Be we the courage-bringers !
Let laugh the bells, O ringers !
Earth's hero-hearts and singers
 Promise peace.
Despair and grief why borrow —
Full long has man had sorrow !
Work, joyful, for the morrow, —
 Wrong shall cease.

Chorus. — Never fear ! Light is growing !
 Never fear ! Truth is flowing
 Where humanity shall share it, —
 Never fear !
 Never fear ! clouds are fleeing ;
 Never fear ! men are seeing
 That the Good at last shall conquer, —
 Never fear !

With hope and high endeavor
Earth's great have striven ever
The bonds of ill to sever, —
 We may trust !

The Past's prophetic preaching,
The Present's clearer teaching,
The Future's forward-reaching,—
Win they must !

Chorus. — Never fear ! Light is growing !
Never fear ! Truth is flowing, *etc.*

Man yet is onward striving,
All happy Art is thriving,
The Age of Good arriving,—
Give it scope !
The heights of Being call us ;
If doubt nor fear appall us
Life's splendor shall befall us,—
Work and hope !

Chorus. — Never fear ! Light is growing !
Never fear ! Truth is flowing
Where humanity shall share it,—
Never fear !
Never fear ! clouds are fleeing ;
Never fear ! men are seeing
That the Good at last shall conquer,—
Never fear !

POEMS OF HUMAN PROGRESS

IV. SONNETS

THE DAYSPRING

Earth's night is waning ! Beautiful and fair
The dayspring flashes gold across the deep.
I see the wailing nations cease to weep,
For War and Want lie wounded in their lair
And know their end approacheth. Stricken,— bare,—
Bewildered by the Day,— the selfish heap
Of woes that thrive in darkness take their leap
To escape the sunbeams netting in their hair.
O human race ! whose hope-illumined heart
Greets light with light in answering ecstasy,
Let Love and Wisdom flame to more and more !—
Flame till there shines on every field and mart
The longed-for, deathless day of Liberty,
And every sea laps sunlit Plenty's shore.

RECIPROCATION

Men in all ages have sowed seed for me,
And I have plucked the ripened fruit and grain.
Through toil of hand and weariness of brain
They brought a wealth of luxury to be,
And I inherit it. The good I see
And thoughtless thrive in, comes by their long pain.
Vassals of Nature, they threw off the chain
And handed me their hard-won liberty.
What then? shall I but take? Nay, also give,
As eager to enhance the age-long charm,
And Man still higher reach, still wider hope,
With simpler, purer pleasures learn to live,
'Gainst wrongs still rampant lift redemptive arm,
To Love's best energies give loftier scope.

THE NEW CREATORS

How blest am I, who number in my friends
Rare souls whose labors glorify the earth! —
Who seek not honors, but with eager worth
Urge human destiny to highest ends.
They toil heart buoyant, though the world contends;
With mild persistence they transfigure dearth
To fulness; and they meet that higher birth —
Life "saved" by who alone life freely spends.

As War is ended ; as Man's age-long blight
Of Ignorance is vanquished, and his Will beguiled
To tame earth's crudeness ; as to every child
Who calls the Earth his Mother more shall flow
Of her abundance — so these friends may know
They are "as gods," from Chaos wringing Light.

DREAM - PROPHECY

I dreamed last night of standing amid flowers
That danced and nodded in the fragrant air.
Charmed with their grace I called and called, till
 there
Were eager throngs all plucking from the bowers,
Each handing best to each. My dream seemed hours
 While young and gray, the haggard and the fair,
Kept plucking — yet the beds grew never bare,
But faster blossomed. Human song, "Ours,
 ours ! —
Not mine or thine, but ours !" outrang as sweet
 As glee of thrushes. His dear hands flung high,
A child held roses for his sire to view ;
A man wreathed poppies round his mother's feet :
 "For the first time, dear heart," I heard him cry,
 "Earth's gifts to all men are for me and you ! "

LOWELL

What was thy Message, Poet, to our day ?
 What call of God, earth's meanness to retrieve ? . . .
 As when one stands upon a hill at eve,
 And sees rich valleys fade in growing gray,
 Till blooming field and forest-girdled bay
 Are lost in gloom, and man and Nature grieve ;
 Yet, glancing up, finds splendors that relieve,—
 Star-hosts that hold on high their glowing way :
 So, in an age with richest gainings fraught,
 Men have seen Greatness fade, and feared the worst !
 Seen selfishness down-settle like a pall !
 But lo ! Man's power divine to reach the *Ought* —
 This the glad light which on thy vision burst,
 Prophetic of Love lord at last o'er all.

IN ADMIRATION OF WORLD-
HELPERS

O earnest Fathers ! sweet-faced Sisterhood !
 Martyrs and Saints of whate'er faith or dress !
 Self-spent through years so none be comfortless,—
 In thought of others, self in self subdued !
 Striving to make mankind more pure and good
 By warning word and all unused caress ;
 Earth's saviours ever from perfidiousness,

Yet scourged and scorned ; oft lacking fire and
food !

Would that To-day — this trebly fine To-day —

We your helped brothers 'mid the world's mad strife
Might through your love and sacrifices rare

Be led to walk your same strong, towering way :

Calming the world that hungereth for life
By breath of Brotherhood's supernal air.

CHILDREN'S CHILDREN¹

The Demon Deities of Air and Flood

Still crumble cities and o'ersurge men's fields ;
Ambitious War still drenches lands with blood,
And Avarice its weedy harvest yields.

Man's conquest, Nature ! of thy forces vast

Is but begun — thy power still checks his pride ;
But wait : his skill thy crudeness shall recast,
And calm thy winds, thy river-courses guide.

His rein already is upon thy neck ;

On thine too, Carnage ! — slink into thy cage !

And be thou just, O Greed, ere might shall check ;
Man knows thee mortal as he comes of age.

Ye weep, earth's creatures, in the present hour ;

Sing too ! in forecast of your children's dower.

¹ Written at the time of the Western cyclones and the Southern floods, and of the Turkish and Balkan massacres (1913).

DETITUS

I

Could they who till the Mississippi's vales—
 Through thousand thousand leagues far-stretched
 and fair—
 Know well what wealth of distant mountain stair
 Has crumbled to endow their verdant dales ;
 Could they but hear the pounding of old gales
 In lands of Seneca and Crow and Bear,
 Or count the centuries the sun and air
 Have filched from forest-lands with silent flails :
 Did they thus ken how came their rich black earth,—
 By grain and grain from Gardens of the Gods,
 From skyey lines far yonder out of reach
 Where Allegheny, Yellowstone, have birth,—
 What new luxuriance would star their sods,
 How costlier far would gleam each vine and peach !

II

O humankind ! From hills where darkness hides,
 From lands of old where lava-torrents hum,
 Down river-ways tumultuous thou hast come,—
 With yet small lodgment found where grain abides.
 How slow the centuries ! how blind the guides !
 The multitude — how deaf and halt and dumb !
 Yet steadily Love's wealth adds sum to sum,
 And age by age the flood of Wrong subsides.

O smiling plains where yet the rose shall bloom,
The rose of Health, the lilies white of Peace,
And every golden grain and fruitful vine :
For thy blest fields we labor to make room,
Where bitterness of Dead Sea fruit shall cease
And life grow rich on mingled oil and wine.

III

And thou — Myself ! Thou, too, in hills unknown
Hadst thy far rising, and thy lineage
Lies dimly writ on equi-distant page
With nebulæ ere earth knew sea or zone.
Dread mystery of Being ! epochs lone
Onworking steadily with mete and gauge
To urge old Chaos into Cosmic-stage
And bring the Age of Man from Age of Stone !
Thine ancestry — in body and in mind —
The fathers of thy healthfulness or pains,
The mothers of thy victories and fears,
Oh, who shall probe thy secret depths and find !
Small clue thou holdest whom to thank for gains,
Or who it is that weepeth in thy tears.

IV

Did some progenitor who loved the lyre
Chant to the sunrise in the ages gray ? —
Is that, O Self, whenever thou wouldst pray,
Why songs ecstatic in thy soul aspire ?

Wilful or blindly, did some other sire
 Cry to his passions, "Have thy fill to-day"?—
 Came thus thy torture when thou wouldest obey
 The law of virtue—all thy frame on fire?
 The Past is gone: it is not dead, but past:
 Its good aggrandize—Time will ease its wrong.
 The Present and the Future—these thy quest!
 Live that, when gaze of distant years is cast
 Back to thy time by those whose lives are strong,
 Their tribute be, "By him the world was blest!"

MEDITATION AFTER THE PASSING OF ERNEST CROSBY

How many stalwart saviours of the race—
 Dear friends of mine—have taken sudden way
 Into the Cave of Silence, and there stay,
 Since first Love's selflessness I learned to trace!
 Their fiery darts they hurled at earth's disgrace,—
 Then sank to Darkness from the desperate fray;
 While hordes—great God!—still bask on Hills
 of Day
 And turn on Wrong an unimpassioned face!
 Oh, who shall dare to tread the earth for naught,

His pulse still red, when even from dead dust
Of Great Ones soars an influence of Might !
Oh, meagre men are we who yet have caught
No soul's contagion from their reverent " Must ! "
No self-renouncement for Man's larger right.

O STORY-TELLER ! POET !

Shall he his trust betray in whom the spark
Imperious, creative, urges " Write " ? —
Content with artful form and glow-worm light
While dowered Prometheus-like to lume the Dark
With godlike radiance ? Lift your vision ! hark,
O Story-teller ! Poet ! — ye whose sight
Gives you to lessen Man's inglorious plight
And lure his blindfold eyes to skyey mark !
Sound ye the Word which shall transform men's
thought
Till they, enfranchised, learn that lowliest deed
For human brotherhood is loftier prize
Than ocean contours for which kings have fought,
Or gold, the pallid recompense of greed.
Dimmed are Self's torches held 'gainst Love's
clear skies.

RESIDUUM

I

Of all who lived aforetime,— hosts on hosts,—
 Dear dark-eyed babes where reedy Nilus swings,
 Sweet Indian maids who danced to vina-strings,
 White souls who peered through Persia's sunrise-
 posts,
 Meek hordes who drooped on China's swarming
 coasts,—
 Dread millions upon millions by the springs
 Of Niger, Danube, Volga,— slaves and kings :
 Of all these now where even are the ghosts !
 And yet they loved and worshiped, smiled and wept,
 Filled full, as we do, life's allotted page,
 Dreamed dreams of Good, and hoped to see its day.
 When myriad suns have round the planet crept,
 As we of others, so some curious age
 May seek our line, and wonder, “ Where are
 they ” !

II

And lo ! should some indeed, when we have passed,
 Attempt to trace our footprints in earth's sands,
 Think not we shall have wholly fled the lands :
 What once hath been doth somehow ever last.

Dead dreams of Ind and Egypt still hold fast
And fetter Thought in more than iron bands ;
The labor of the earliest artist hands
Is with us yet and gives our toil its cast.

O son of man ! Strong daughter of the race !
With you to-day the good or ill resides
Of myriad souls who yet shall weep and pray.
What tinge ye give of white or crimson trace
To thought and deed, eternally abides :
Ye still shall live — in saint or castaway.

ENTOMBED

When base Domitian stained the Cæsars' throne,
A Vestal Virgin dared rebuke his shame.
Enraged, he clouded her with artful blame,
Then buried her alive in crypt of stone.

What solace later, though her truth was shown !
The mouldered ear responds to no acclaim :
Her eyes with dust estopped—despoiled in name—
She long had perished, woeful and alone.

Alone ? O World, a host thou hast decried
And scourged, and buried in their wishful prime,
Whom later centuries in awe obeyed !

Some ev'n to-day, perchance, are thrust aside,
Entombed though living, who would lift their time :
In dust of negligence all smothering laid.

TO YIELD

Darius, when perhaps he might have won,
In sudden fear forsook Arbela's plain.
No vantage then his captains could maintain,
And the great day was lost, to Philip's son. . . .
Did some prevision, monarch, through thee run
That, shouldst thou lose, the mighty world would
gain ?
That in the triumph-shock which knelled thy pain
Asia, asleep, should hear her sunrise-gun ?
Oft would earth's progress, for which some men strive
With bitter tears, — yea, pouring lavish blood, —
Be sooner summoned if they fled the field !
Outworn the methods which they pray may thrive !
Mankind sweeps past them with resistless flood.
Oft highest victory is still to yield.

POEMS OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

I. MISCELLANEOUS

EARTH'S GOLDEN PRIME LIES INFINITELY ON

[1883]

“If ye continue in my word,” said he
Who walked of old through flower-sprent Galilee,
“The truth ye then shall know.” Ah, teacher great !
Thy word the world’s late years still illustrate.

Thy gospel was of simplest thought and deed :
Two words alone thy all embracing creed, —
To seek ! to love ! — the utmost truth to seek ;
In love for man that utmost truth to speak.

“And ye have heard it said of olden time,
‘Lo, this !’ ‘Lo, that !’ But, nay ! earth’s golden
prime
Lies infinitely on, where none can see.
A new commandment, therefore, give I thee.”

New days require new thoughts, new words, new
works.

Blasphemer he who those new meanings shirks !

Shall men forever only backward glance? —
That were to serve but shame and ignorance.

“The truth that is, I come not to destroy”; —
Truth’s service, rather, is divinest joy!
The Past did well — it could but blindly see.
To larger knowledge be as faithful we!

O lover wise on hills of Palestine!
If still the power to seek and love be thine,
What joy thou hast, though Truth thyself o’er-arch,
That Man still hastens on his upward march!

“SIGNS AND WONDERS”

[1882]

I ask not “miracles” to guard my faith
And keep it from the clutch of grim Despair!
To me a miracle is but a wraith,
While Gracious Fact is mine in earth and air.

In Nature’s Constancy I find my joy;
I know that Good has been, will always be,
And now in manhood, even as a boy,
I ask but Natural Opportunity.

I ask but still the rosy light of morn,
The strength that after rest makes labor sweet;
To know the simpler deeds that life adorn,
That I may follow with glad, willing feet.

Beauty doth everywhere paint sights for me,
Raising the dead at heart to life divine ;
I view the dawn-winds walking on the sea,
Suns in rich vineyards making water wine.

Concentric circles of earth, wave, and sky,
Cut by the far horizon's purple rim, —
All come as miracle, — as such go by, —
And all compel from me the grateful hymn.

The laws Mind follows to Thought's farthest zone
In conquest over Nature's secrets vast, —
These, too, I know who studieth makes his own,
Gaining rare triumphs that his life outlast.

The fossils in the rocks I count my prize, —
More eloquent by far than o'er-writ "Text" !
They are God's own Epistle for man's eyes,
Not records fifty scribbling monks have vext.

And yonder Lights ! . . . O tireless-swinging Orbs !
Not in a trillion years one hair's-breadth free
From paths the Energy which all absorbs
Swung vastly for your whirling ecstasy ! —

A "Bible" ye indeed ! wherein I scan
Forces which never tire, retrace, nor bend ; —
From which I solve, or seem to solve, for Man,
The law on-urging him to some fine end.

Nor these alone, but thousand sounds and signs,
Around, beneath, within, in soul and clod,

A child's sweet kisses, Summer's purpling vines,
These all proclaim the animating God.

So onward go I, silent in the crowd ;
I hear the clamor, but I answer not.
What harm to me their whisperings low or loud !
The Law Eternal can they change a jot ?

And for the rest, — our own small arc of Time, —
Though little know I, much I hope and trust.
At any rate, mine *now* the Power Sublime,
Not into cycles dead and distant thrust !

Yea, for the rest I am content to know
For ages yet shall Spring nor Autumn cease ;
While, east or west, — where'er I turn or go, —
A Voice in pines, in wheatlands, whispers " Peace ! "

Let others in dim child-world dreamings dwell,
Still bolstering bravely up their marvelous tales,
Roaming through Purgatories, Heavens, and Hell
With faith that must have " miracles," or fails ! —

Ample for me is Nature's hourly wealth,
Her Present wonders, — helpful, lavish, sure !
With these, and open eyes, my soul finds health ;
Through life and death my victories endure.

TO TRUTH — MY GOD

[1883]

Till ages fail,
And love receives its own ;
Till Æons pale,
And faith is wiser grown,
Be Truth my God.

I may not always live
My high Ideal,
But high resolve I give,
Come woe or weal,
To Truth — my God.

And thus, I feel,
My soul shall never fail !
The buds that heal
Pass not with frost or hail, —
They grow to more !

And though eye may be dim,
And sense be weak,
My heart still chants its hymn,
Soul joy doth speak —
God more and more.

“PREPARED”

[1888]

I know not why good men should say
That he who dreams a dream divine,
And seeks it, soulful, does not “pray” !
That he who still sees Beauty shine
Through all life’s ill, and flowers entwine
With solar glow to hide earth’s gray,
Is drunk with “irreligious” wine —
Because he does not “pray” !

Nor know I why good men should sigh,
Deeming him far from good and God
Who yet in darkness hears Love’s cry ;
In lambent orb and lowliest sod
Progressive Order can descry,
A Process broad and deep and high ; —
Finding alike in soul and clod
A “very present” God !

I know not why good men have sought ·
To speak him “Christless” who yet goes
In paths the Galilean taught, —
Seeking what he his neighbor owes,
Striving poor lives with misery fraught
To heal of something of their woes. . . .
“But ah ! he cries not ‘Lord’ — and ought !
This man of ‘Christless’ thought ! ”

Still, o'er him flushes golden sky !
Better than Night he loves the Day.
In the divine he dwells, say I,—
So close he has no need to "pray";
More than his want is the supply! . . .
So, "doing the Will," and "knowing the Way,"
He standeth needy world-souls nigh,—
 "Prepared" to live or die.

DEEPER AND HIGHER

Oh, blest that as the centuries fly
Man's soul doth deeper, higher roam !
Yet feels the more that earth and sky
Are but a vaster temple home :
Temple that needs no sun to thrill,
So grand its inner, fadeless light,—
The godlike, in the human, still
Redeeming it from evil plight.

Above the clamors of our day,
Which heedless drown the still small voice,
We hear a mightier Presence say :
Rejoice, O sons of men ! rejoice !
Be open still to prophets' cry ;
Go on to keener insight yet !
Much still remains of deep and high
Ere suns and stars of God are set.

GOD AND MAN

Where is beauty ? Where is grace ?
 What life their strength embodies ?
 Look within a human face :
 Where love and help are, God is.
 Seek this mystery to trace ! —
 Heaven and earth its lines embrace,
 Souls, and suns, and stellar space.

Wondrous is the mighty Power
 Wherein we have our being !
 Every day and every hour
 Brings joy for hearing, seeing ;
 Joy of stream and star and flower,
 Joy of sky-flung spectrum-bower,
 Planet-haze and atom-shower.

Love, no less, of human hearts,
 Which makes all life worth living,
 From the One, the Only, starts,
 Man's highest glory giving.
 This to know transcends all arts : —
 From the Whole the partial darts ;
 Man's love God's love counterparts.

MAN'S BEST WORD GOD'S TRUE WORD

[1891]

The highest Truth is ever Word of God.

“My doctrine is not mine,” said he of old,
“But His that sent me.” And the fabled rod
Which Moses wielded was not his, ’t was told,
But “symbol” only, of a Vaster Power
Which feebly he forthshadowed for an hour.

Too much our human selves we separate
From the Divine Effulgence which is All !
A Deity far off we paint, and prate
Of God as hid behind dividing wall.
Such dream as this is shadow drear and dun —
A glow-worm dimness, not the wondrous sun.

No Word of Good was ever breathed not God's !
No stroke for Freedom but God held the arm !
Lo, then, to-day, these Creeds' o'erturning sods —
They token Heaven's rejoicing, not alarm.
Oh let us deem Man's own best Word of Hope
Still God's true Word, and Man's best horoscope.

THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH WE ARE MADE FREE

When thought of what the God may be
Oft changes like the changing sea,—
Revealing that Man's needs profound
To deeper depths of Being sound ;
When saviours vanish in a cloud
Attenuate as Enoch's shroud ;
When Bibles shrink to myth and tale,
And Church's magic Credos fail,—
Then glows the heart triumphantly :
At last the soul of man is free !
Tradition binds no more his sight —
His searching meets Eternal Light ;
Though gleam of cross and altar shrinks,
His spirit at life's fountains drinks ;
In place of signs and symbols weak
He hears his own high conscience speak ;
His soul the Beautiful and Good
Embraces as its habitude ;
In truth of self and toil for man
He finds an all-sufficing Plan,—
And is content to know the Whole
Embraces origin and goal.

THE AGE OF GOOD

Mankind has waited long ;
Still saved by hope it waits,
Calming its eagerness with song
While quelling fears and hates.

No more the soul is bound
By childhood's partial creeds :
Love makes the earth all holy ground
And fills all human needs.

War's trumpet still may peal,
And Greed with Greed may fight,
But they who shape earth's future weal
Urge Brotherhood and Right.

The flashing sunlight clear
On many a mountain's head
Is symbol of earth's passing fear ;
Wrong's shadowy hosts are fled.

O happy Age to Be,
When Ignorance lies prone !
When Love has perfect liberty,
Nor meets for bread a stone ! —

Be ours to sing thy praise,
Be ours to aid thy birth,
And earlier bring the wished-for days
Of Righteousness on earth.

IN THE NAME OF GOD

[1892]

Ah, Conclaves, Councils ! “ In the name of God ”
 Ye judge your fellows, wielding creedal rod.

“ As servants of the Meek of Galilee ”
 Ye smite and maim — but not by his decree !

Up, and awake ! Ye strive in vain to stay
 With banning words the sunrise of To-day.

Still “ who is not against ” is on Truth’s side,
 And with him angels ever shall abide.

STAR AND CROSS

[1887]

“ The time has come when all men shall be free ! ”
 Thus in my dream an Angel spake to me :
 An Angel on whose forehead gleamed a Star,—
 Beneath whose feet reclined a shattered Spar.

Bright was his countenance, though dread his word !
 Raptured I gazed, but shuddered as I heard :

“ I am inspirer of the Modern Seer :
Knowledge,—‘ Star-eyed,’ men call me, and do well !
 Secrets of Past and Coming Time I tell ;
 Earth’s child-conceptions fade now I am here !

In hope foundationless, enmixed with fear,
Before the Central Scaffold of the years
Full long a time a thoughtless world has bowed.
Now see we clearer! clearer still shall see!
Take hence the Cross!—here, wrap it in its shroud!
In reverence bear it — wet with wasted tears —
Futile as sign of Immortality —
To Arimathean Joseph's rock-cut tomb
(Where he for Greatness made in love fair room),
And lay it where its Victim's ashes be!
The *Star* henceforth be symbol — stars give light:
The Cross's origin was Dreams and Night.”

The Vision smiled, and light upon me broke.
But some — “It thundered, not an Angel spoke!”

THE NEW EVANGEL

[1889]

Come to the cradle, and bow:
Knowledge is Saviour now.
 And the airs that blow
 And the waters that flow —
The Forces of Nature
Increasing Man's stature —
 Are the modern Angels
 That murmur Evangelists.
Seize on them while you may!
Be blest in the life of To-day!

UPLIFTS OF HEART AND WILL

Uplifts of eager heart and earnest will !

Pulsings of soul ! —

These, in their high, unintermittent surge,

Make Being whole. . . .

Surgings of Spirit tow'rd the unknown Source

Whence cometh all ;

Surgings of Will to Duty, fair or hard,

Whate'er befall :

Ambitions high, to follow nobly out

The earthly Real ;

Resolves no less to breathe Heaven's purer air —

The far Ideal !

Strugglings for self — to win and nobly use

Time's fairer good ;

Strugglings sublime for others — to make fact

Man's brotherhood.

Not surgings for an hour to rush and roar,

And then subside ;

But higher, holier surgings, that shall pour
In endless tide. . . .

These are the Race, the Goal, the Home, the God,
In all earth's strife ;
These are, and shall be ever, soul of soul,
And life of life.

TRANSFORMATION

Full long the years to Man were all unkind ;
To what was highest in him he was blind.

The Seer was born, and opened were men's eyes
To visions splendid and celestial skies !

We are not clay alone — mere sons of earth —
But born of highest in the universe.
In soul nor matter is inherent curse.
By noble striving we dispel life's dearth,
And gaining selflessness we meet a birth
To fairer good than fabled gods disburse.

IN SECRET

"O ye gods, grant me to be beautiful in soul."—*Socrates.*

'Mid quiet hills (the yearning spirit's quest !)
 This dear wild aster, in its lonely place
 In Wildcat Notch—'gainst rocky wall hard pressed—
 Blossoms as freely, with as perfect grace,
 As if amid some hundred-poppied nook
 In parkways where the eager thousand look.

O Power unknown,—unknown for all my cry ;
 Forever in thy solveless mystery clad,—
 Behold ! oft likewise lift I quiet face
 In regions lonely, with no passer by !
 Would that some perfectness, transmuting bad,
 Might shine in me, though seen not by the race.

WHENCE THE GLORY ?

From out this swaying tent of sunlit green,
 This fragrant pine-tree in whose shade I lie,
 What melody, accusing while serene,—
 What whisper,—answers my impatient cry ?

"Thou little knowest of the far and high,
 And pain is present in the near and seen ?

Thou knowest not of bliss beyond the sky,
But spurnest threats of an abysmal deep?
Thou art not reconciled that such as Man—
When falls the darkness—should forever sleep?
O'er virtue human waywardness holds ban?
Oppression hastes, while love and justice creep? . . .
What if Life's Mystery thou canst not span!
Enough that day by day thy duty shows!
Enough that conscience sings of high estate,
And, when thou sinkest, makes thy heart elate!
When out from primal Chaos love arose,
It was the flashing of a faithful sun
With promise of a fair and fruitful earth
Where will and longing should meet radiant dower.”

“But love and will,” I answered, “are of Man,
Through weary centuries accumulate!”

“Yet was it not in Nature man had birth,
As still through Nature he ascends to power?—
Yet more and more to climb, as wisdom grows,
Till haply love and God are seen as One?
Hath not my green its glory from the sun?”

Thus greenly sang my pine-tree all the day,
Till blest I rose, and went my hopeful way.

“LABORERS TOGETHER”

I live not far from Thee. I grasp Thee not —
Thy secret Being still unknown abideth !
But life's sweet good — Thy good — through mine
is shot,
And when I err, Thy silent mandate chideth.

Thy mandate ? — or my own ? Transcendent
Thine ? —
Or mine by human heritage through ages ?
The faiths accumulate at human shrine
At last have merged as one these two bright
pages !

In Thee I live, and Thou no less in me :
Through all eternities we wend together.
In aught can I work answering help for Thee ? —
Yea, live to add to Love's white wing a feather.

POEMS OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

II. SONNETS

SEARCH

What thought of God have hungering men to-day
That they themselves have not sought out and
found ?

What spot of earth is christened holy ground
But where high souls have walked their human
way ?

What laws and precepts by which sages say
Life's good is best set free and evil bound,
But came from fine endeavors proven sound
By loves and agonies of young and gray ?

All faith, all knowledge, springs in man's own heart,
And from his partial sight he moulds his creed,
Not thinking he shall wider know and see !

Henceforth mankind shall learn this wiser part :—
Who honors Truth, in thought and word and deed,
He best, O mighty Marvel, worships Thee.

LOFTIER GOOD

O hungering earth ! in these aspiring years —
 Which build new faiths like blossoms from the sod,
 Still seeking higher heaven and higher God —
 What mightier hopes are thine, transforming fears !
 What vaster sight ! No cause for grief or tears,
 But loftier good than any when men trod
 With fixed stern faces fearing threatening rod, —
 Since now a manlier onset charms our ears :
 High onset for the Truth whate'er it be !
 For only in the Truth can rest be found,
 Or Brotherhood, or knowledge of The Way.
 Rejoice, O world long drugged with fantasy !
 Through Truth shall every ill at last be bound,
 And good increasingly hold life in sway.

WORSHIP

Must fear indeed accept what love denies,
 And faith receive what reason bids disdain ?
 Can priestly word wash out hate's caustic stain,
 Or cross or shambles purge a soul of lies ?
 O signs and symbols by which conscience buys
 An anaesthetic for its soul-birth pain,
 Too long ye charm a world which seeks to gain
 A listless mansion in the dubious skies.

Arouse, O child of mystery unguessed !
Put goodness in thy life and in thy creed !
To-day well lived best wins the day to be
And finds it in undreamed-of beauty dressed.
Tradition's staff is but a broken reed,
While love and truth uphold the skies and sea.

REVELATION

What hast thou heard, O soul, with inward ear,
That makes all written Word to thee seem
naught ? . . .
Upon the Shore Eternal I have caught
The rhythmic murmur,—“One are There and
Here,
And Life and Death ! All, all is void of fear ;
The Power that out of lowliness hath brought
The rose to beauty, and man's spirit fraught
With godlike aims, still pulsates every sphere !
We live, we love, — we vanish. Still we are,
And in eternal round we live and grow,
And love again, and rise to more and more.
O ye who suffer ! all your grief unbar !
Ye suffer only while ye hug your woe.
No tempest shatters on this deeper shore.”

“OF ONE”

Jesus, thy teachings oft have made me smart
 When I have failed in love for fellow men.
 Siddartha, grief has been my portion when
 Thy selflessness has taught my feverish heart
 Its vain ambitions. When some coward start
 Has seized me, thou, Mohammed, then
 Hast stirred to bravery. Thy moral ken,
 Confucius, spurs me when I fail life's better part.
 O saviours many, of time old and new! —
 Alike ye lead from darkness to the light.
 O words as high within my own calm breast! —
 No less ye summon Wisdom to pursue.
 Still sound, O clarions of love and right,
 Till I win Freedom serving your behest.

THE MOTHER

Why should we limit Power and Mystery
 To one poor pronoun of our human speech?
 Has deity no higher, wider reach
 Than we can grasp when glibly we say “He?”
 The fertile universe at least is “She,”
 Fruitful in brain and pinion, flower and peach; —
 And ever dumb when we its face beseech,
 It seems but “It,” it stands so silently.

O mighty MOTHER! — foremost art thou this !
And we thine offspring, clinging to thy breast !
Thou givest us the stars and streams for toys ;
In thy benignant smile alone is bliss.
Though ignorant, in thy wise calm we rest,
And when thou frownest, darkened are our joys.

BEACON - LIGHTS

The brilliant beacon-lights that bound the shore
With hope to storm-tossed mariners are fraught :
What matter, so their radiance be caught,
They flash from rock, or bluff, or beach, or tower ?
The sailor doubts not their propitious power,
But heeds their warning with his every thought :
He heeds their warning, and the ship is brought
To home and harbor in a happy hour.
Along the headlands of life's perilous sea
Beam steadfast lights of human will and love !
What matter, Jew, Greek, Christian, if the light
Be followed faithfully ? It then shall be
A Guiding Light indeed, to Ports above :
A pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night.

RELIGION AS A LIFE

I

Religion is to eat and drink for health ;
Keep body sweet and clean, and breathe full deep ;
Hold supple frame and mind the highest wealth ;
Through honest toil each day earn soundest sleep.

II

Religion is to seek the good of Man ;
To give each child a welcome on earth's ball ;
Put private avarice 'neath scornful ban ;
Make every "good" a joy and strength for all.

III

Religion is to find a child's repose
In Nature's beauty and Law's rhythmic beat ;
To deem the wonder of an opening rose
Symbolic of the Heart of Things as sweet.

IV

With soul entranced by the mysterious all,
Be ardor mine to meet religion's call !

“I WILL LAY MINE HAND UPON
MY MOUTH.”—*Book of Job*

[Written after listening to extended theological speculations
followed by heated eschatological discussion]

O wondrous Power in which we live and move,—
As gods in greatness for our moment's space !
Not ours the mighty mystery to trace
Of How and What, — nor doth it us behoove
To wail, despairing, that we cannot prove
The very lines on some benignant Face,
Or through ethereal mazes with Thee race
To oil for Thee each planetary groove !
Enough if human brotherhood abounds ;
Enough if earth to-day is fair and wide
Nor crashes yet, a cinder, to its doom !
And as for problems of extended grounds,
And as for place where myriad souls can bide,
The “infinite” can scarcely lack for room !

RECOGNITION OF ONENESS

Pervasive Power! — all present and all free! —
Within whose greatness I myself am great!
Since first I recognized myself in Thee
Where are my burdens flown, my low estate?
Ye pains of earth, that held me in your power,
Beclouding the divine I vainly sought, —
Say! whither did ye vanish in that hour? . . .
Ah, pains, ye cannot answer — ye are naught!
Within myself are the Eternal Springs,
And rise they high as I myself rise high.
What wonder that uncramped my spirit sings,
And that I younger grow as seasons fly!
Since I am one with all the Good there is,
No prayers I have, but only symphonies.

WINGS

When earth's first parents, in the legend old,
Had tasted Knowledge and discerned it sweet,
They gave their innocence for freedom bold,
And, singing, to new pathways turned their feet.
Methinks no flaming sword, with point of light,
Now turning this way and now turning that,
Was needed to preserve that gateway bright,—
For who would linger where that angel sat !
No Eden past can equal Eden new ;
Oh, renegade to God whose will is weak !
Forever overhead love's skies are blue,
Forever doth the voice at evening speak.
On Wisdom's pinions endless beauties wait ;
And where are wings, what service is a gate ?

“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”

These forward shocks still speak my course aright!—
For me no port can ever lie astern.
East, and still east, the Morning's signals burn,
And I must follow where I see the light.
On every hand fair ships take shoreward flight,—
So help me Heaven my course I cannot turn!
Not once since early start did bosom yearn
To lie at ease again on coasts of Night.
And recompense? Oh, much! One closest friend,
With whom for evermore I still must steer,
Would spurn me if I veered to west or south!
But having him my lover to the end,
No other paradise could be so dear,
No tropic's kiss so sweet upon my mouth.

POEMS OF LIVING

I. MISCELLANEOUS

MAN'S OPPORTUNITY

I

He does not think — he does not know :
 A wave is breaking on the shore ;
 A wave surcharged with richest ore
And tinged with deepest golden glow.

He heeds it not — he does not know :
 It scatters pearls athwart his path ;
 It bathes as in a purple bath
The boundaries where his feet must go.

He heeds it not — he passes by :
 It breaks, it bursts upon the strand,
 Its wealth is squandered on the sand,
Its pearls in shattered fragments fly.

II

He does not know — he does not guess :
 A flower is blossoming at his feet ;
 A flower is offering incense sweet —
And fading in the wilderness.

He heeds it not — he passes on :
 Its purple petals droop and die ;
 Its wealth is wasted on the sky :
It might have bloomed by Helicon.

III

He does not know — he does not dream :
 A star is flaming in the sky ;
 A star that passes swiftly by,—
A star of high, transcendent gleam !

He sees nor feels its cheering light :
 It glows and gleams indeed, to-day ;—
 To-morrow, deepening into gray,
Shall find it vanished in the Night.

IV

He does not seek — he does not think :
 A fountain gushes at his hand :
 Its wealth he does not understand :
He looks nor moves, nor stoops to drink.

V

He does not think — he does not know :
 A song is trembling through the air ;
 A bird is warbling anthems rare
And murmuring lyrics sweet and low.

He hears nor heeds — he passes on :
And wings are raised — a birdling flies ;
The trembling cadence fails and dies :
The anthem and the bird are gone.

VI

He does not see — he does not take.
A wave, a flower, a star, a song,
A fountain — all to him belong.
Oh, when shall he arise, awake !

UNGRASPED

On many a marvel which Nature discloses
Man's eye never looks, and the daintiest roses
Bloom wild where his footsteps may never have
stirred.

Unseen by man's eye, and untouched by his hand,
Lie treasures unnumbered awaiting command
If only his heart and his will say the word.

With noble realities life is replete ;
But he who shall seek them with wandering feet
Shall never earth's best benediction have heard.

THYSELF WITHIN

Amid the ceaseless loss and change
Of time and friends and all below,—
(O things we love ! how swift ye go !
O things that are ! how new and strange !) —
Ah, whither shall our spirits range
A more eternal life to know !

In Syria, Ind, or Egypt sought,
One answer only have the years
Sent down to banish hopes and fears :—
Within thyself must heaven be caught
And captive held,— or all is tears !
For this saints died and martyrs fought.

Thyself within ! Thyself within !
O soul, find here thy strength, thy peace.
Pray not that loss and change may cease,—
Pray, rather, higher heights to win !
Thy spirit's loftier wings release,
And soar thee where thou art akin !

THE PATH OF SUN

Across the harbor's placid wave
The pathway of the sun is bright.
The orb uprising from its grave
Has pushed away the angry night,
And now the beating sea is still,
And lit from Heaven's hill.

O wings of white that flit across !
You sails that flash and fall and rear !
I know not what of pain or loss
The souls you carry bear or fear ;
I know this hour their eyes are bright
With morn's exultant light.

O heart of mine, O faith of mine,
You have not sunk or wailed at loss ;
You fathom not the far divine,
But light with smiles each daily cross ;
And still your path till life is run
Shall be the path of sun.

LIFE'S MEANING

[1889]

Oft, when I have walked at dawning by the margin
of the sea,
Of the hopefulness of Nature it has sung its song
to me.

With a soul tow'rd light determined I have sought
its secret word,
And its accents have been music I have elsewhere
never heard.

True, the sea itself is "cruel"—never shrinks it
back for pain.
But its tide-falls cleanse the continents, its mists
bring tender rain.

So throughout the whole of Nature;—there is evi-
dence of good,
Bringing order out of chaos, smiling fields where
oceans stood.

And 'tis thus—a meaning finding even in its harsh-
est strife—
That I follow onward cheerly through this wondrous
thing called life.

Life! whose warp is ceaseless effort, while its woof
is Progress still,
As it was through countless epochs ere the world
knew human will.

Life! the symphony whose harmony would languish
into death
If it never knew the discord which brings out its
sweeter breath.

Life! the fair and boundless continent, amid whose
sunlit ways
We enact heroic dramas, living nobly-eager days.

True, our petty "titles" vanish — but we live not for
a "name";
To exist in added world-good were a thousand times
the fame!

And we know we cannot act a deed of good or deed
of ill
But its ends, accruing ever, through eternities shall
thrill.

He who, aching, tills the cornfield, in whatever valley
far —
Nobler he in manhood's best than any war-left living
scar.

Toiling scientist and poet, seeking Mother Nature's best —

In the growing good of ages far outweigh they all the rest.

Nobler he than lords of wealth, who in the smart of modern need

Reaches lowly hand of help to bridge the stream of human greed.

So on life's unmeasured rim we nobly act, nor seek return :

While before us, steadfast ever, Hope's eternal torches burn.

And 't is worth the struggle! . . . Faithless! faithless of our Mother Nature's power

To sit down with dull despairings, or to hopeless wail an hour!

Are not we a part of Nature? Then to us the new-age call

The long prayer of years to answer, and on earth bring peace for all.

Here no room for "floating foam-wreaths wafted down from moonlit shores";

Here the summons to work desperate while the hot sun deadly pours!

UNION OF
MISCELLANEOUS

Brothers! know you not men languish for the help
that you can give?
Spend your years in action! action! that a dead world
may new-live.

What though selfish hordes pledge wine-cup at the
banquet or the rout?
Here our place is — to bring joyance to these hungry
eyes without.

Oh, the happiness of living, when we claim a lofty
work!
'T is in faithful future Doing that the good of man
shall lurk.

Life shall then have purpose for us — we shall see it
is divine;
And in fact, not dreamings longer, shall the flower-
decked Eden shine.

Not in vain we seek Life's meaning. If we lift our
heedful eyes
Voices everywhere enthrall us — the whole universe
replies.

FUTURES

Futures flash not into being,
Futures are results of Presents.
When the call of Duty beckons,
Brother, be not thou the laggard.
Justice waits thy strong endeavor.

COIN IN ANY REALM

With place, with gold, with power — oh, ask me not
With these my little hour of life to blot.
A little hour indeed ! and I would fain
Its moments spend in what is worth its pain.
What traveler would faint through troublous lands
To gather only what must leave his hands
The moment that he takes his homeward ship ?
Earth's goods and gauds give every man the slip ;
But wealth of Thought, and richer wealth of Love,
Must pass for coin in any world above.
The good to others done while here I strive
Is all at last that shall my dying shrive ;
And setting sail, my slight self-conquest's store
Is all my freight if I shall come to shore.

SOUL'S PARADISE

All zones I searched—in pain—in glee—
For Paradise, sweet Paradise.

Its stately towers I ne'er could see :
Faint Paradise, far Paradise.

Still on I toiled courageously
Tow'rd Paradise, dear Paradise.
As I approached, its walls would flee :
Sad Paradise, false Paradise.

I ceased my quest ! It then found me !
Close Paradise, self-Paradise !
Now hourly, where I go or be
Is Paradise, soul's Paradise.

FOREVER ON

I would not look at life's high aim aslant !
Life is for growth ! It is a mountain plant,
Its roots descending, but its leaves upspread ;
A shoot divine, whose seeds, when we are dead,
Should spring immortally in other life,
Potent in tendencies to nobler strife,
Showing the soul's high lure, till Time be gone,
To Be, to Do, and so forever on.

“IN THY YOUTH”

What is true manliness ? With banner's sweep
To flaunt abroad that powers have come full tide ?—
With scornful lawlessness to blazon wide
The sacred fire each life should sacred keep ?

To come full-orbed, yet mightily to know
The Titan thrill of holding power in thrall—
This is true manliness ! and this the call
For thee high flung which diamond trumpets blow.

SOUL AND SENSE

Who that perceives the mocking flare of sense,
Or catches vision of the orb of love,
Can doubt which glow shines sweetest recompense—
The valley murk, the unwavering star above ?

Yet oh, the paradox ! that those in shame
Should dream that they alone encompass bliss,
When 't is 'but fitful, phosphorescent flame
To soul-exalting planet-ray like this !

O vision fair of oneness with the Whole !
In thee alone is blessedness and truth.

Insight and strength are thy sweet gifts, O Soul,
And lofty promise of eternal youth.

Give me to rove in the supremer air !
Give me the mountain-side to toil and climb !
I shall breathe easier and freer there,
I shall die calmer on those heights sublime.

LIFE'S BEAUTY

Oh, when often in my bosom
Glows a longing for life's beauty,
Something in me whispers, — urging, —
“ ‘T is incentive to life's duty !
‘T is high impetus to duty.”

And I know the voice speaks truly,
For high peace finds never mortal
Save in strong, sublime endeavor
Worshipful at Duty's portal ;
Steadfast, meek, at Duty's portal.

Flame, then, in my bosom, Beauty !
Flame and glow with fire supernal.
Thou shalt lead me — willing go I ! —
To life's blessedness eternal,
Unto joys ideal, eternal.

WORK

To seek — invent — discover ! To create !
Mountains to carve, wild zones to subjugate,
The seas to merge, rude metals to refine,
Harsh sounds to mingle in mellifluous line,
Disease to vanquish, famine to repel,
World-thought to lift, and peal Wrong's passing-bell ; —

The daily toil of common mill and mart,
The humblest toil, if mixed with thought and heart, —
Lo, 't is man's Angel ! 't is the life of life !
Pain fails of power, and strife no more is strife.
Swiftly flies doubt, and grieving follows fast,
Blown on the wings of this supernal blast.

What art thou, Labor ? Nay, what art thou not ! —
For world's unkindness, soul's sweet garden-spot ;
Shade if detraction's scorching airs arise ;
Sun to illume fear's direful fantasies ;
Lover to give the spirit pure caress ;
Friend to dispel bereavement's loneliness ;
Quencher of wants if poverty befall ;
Narcotic draft for pain tyrannical ;
Disdained affection's Lethe ; — magic wand
To waft us swiftly, soothingly, beyond
Earth's every selfishness and meanness dire,
And bathe the soul in Heaven's own blissful fire !

Do Nature's forces ever idle lurk?
Doth she, the Mighty One, not ceaseless work
To-day as when at her evolving call
From chaos tow'rd perfection sprang earth's ball ?
So toil ye also, hands, heart, mind of me !—
Till latest hour strive on in ecstasy !
Strive on ? Yea, *love* on !— toil and love are one
To him who toils nor wishes toilings done.
Did erst the morning stars with rapture sing ?
Is 't writ, with peace Heaven's echoing arches ring ?
So human souls, through their most secret aisles,
When Labor, baffling weakness, soars and smiles.

CONFessions OF A VOLUPTUARY

[1903]

I

Voluptuary, I ! At dawn's first flash,
While wretched thousands are condemned to sleep,
I rise and in luxurious coolness splash,—
Then on my silent courser joyous leap
To seek the hilltop or the woodland stream,
Or watch the lighthouse as it pales its beam.
The robin and the bobolink and I
Have kindred passion for the morning sky.

II

While others drudge at kitchen board or fire,
Compelled for breakfast's needs to broil or brew,
I talk with novelists who never tire,
Or wing with poets the ethereal blue.
I'd rather bathe my soul than pots and plates,—
Would barter Wedgwood for a bag of dates :
For I have learned that simplest fare is best,
And nuts and fruits make mealtime-seasons blest.

(Forgive me, flocks and herds,— sweet-breath'd as
Ind,—
That range the prairie and the pasture deep !
Forgive me that in ignorance I sinned :
That you were once my sacrifice I weep.
Besides, men learn that they find healthier blood
In pulse than flesh, in figs than carnal flood.
The soul sincere that seeks mind's regions fair
Loves fragrant foods that bloom in sun and air.)

III

When toil begins, and comrades fret and shirk,
I freshen labor with the spirit's test.
Imagination never hindered work.
In perfect product is completest rest.
I take my pleasure as I go along,
And try to make my daily toil my song.
Through half a hemisphere or half a mile
The load pulls easiest harnessed with a smile.

IV

At evening's hour, when others haste to dress,
Condemned to theatre or fashion's whirl,
I sit and give my daughter a caress,
Or in the wine of thought dissolve a pearl.
The pearl is often art's or history's page,
Which thought — on-leading to a Golden Age —
Would fain transmute into such Path of Fate
As blind might follow to Elysian Gate.

A Golden Age? I'm in it even now!
For, wanting little, I have some for others.
(If any, hungry, at my feast would bow,
My morn or evening's richness is my brother's!)
My fond desire is that the world may see
Earth gives enough for all humanity.
Men only need a willingness to share,
And all the world would breathe ambrosial air.

V

'T is true I little have of what men prize,
And often (like the saints) wear shining garb;
But having mirthfulness and open eyes
I bind with velvet life's metallic barb,—
Holding contentment, though in wooden walls,
Better than selfishness in tinseled halls.
While earth's rich Saturnalia still is mine
I shall not fail of spirit's oil and wine.

I would not change my modest daily lot
For any wealth that brought with it a care :
I love my ease too well to wish to blot
 My freedom of the sky and sea and air.
I sink myself in soul and sense each day,
And in voluptuous shamelessness grow gray.
Nay ! — sink myself in joy each hour that's rung,
 And grow each year voluptuously young.

THE LAUGHING PHILOSOPHER

[Read on a "Holmes night"—1891]

Oh, not do saints and bards alone
Who chant the high, the solemn verse,
And counsel but in serious tone,
 Help on the better from the worse.

Full oft the lighter, gayer song,
The sparkle and the flash of wit,
Which gurgle, gush, and float along
 And in and out and yonder flit,—

Not knowing quite what shore they reach,
What capes they pass, what gleaming strand,
Nor deem that they a gospel preach,—
 May also guide to Happier Land.

Such song is his — our Bard to-night !

His verses ripple, gurgle, gush,
Yet bear us with a magic might,
With here a lag, and there a rush,

To where we see that lofty deed
Doth Life of the Divine disburse,
As every dewdrop on the mead
Reveals the rounded universe.

I saw him once — this poet gay —
Beside a window in the street :
What potent presence there that day
Could hold so fine a poet's feet ?

I saw his face one beaming smile —
Intense enjoyment gleamed and shone.
Two mimic dogs, on wires, the while,
Were tugging at a mimic bone !

He turned — eyes met ; — he smiled the more.
“ Best thing I've seen,” said he (and bowed),
“ Since last I by the Common's door
Heard Punch and Judy clamor loud.”

Ah, well ! As the odd scene we spurned,
“ Life's seldom harmed,” said he, “ by fun.
I like the apples southward turned ;
They ripen mellowest in the sun.”

Like Holmes, I too am still a child.
I love my baby's simplest toys ;
Can dance or blow the whistle wild
With any dozen girls or boys.

And deepest thought nor highest hope
Is hindered by such moment's dash.
I'm helped by sunshine, when I grope,
Far more than by the lightning's flash.

No less, the High we need to spell !
The loftiest shown is none too far !
Holmes — yes ! but Emerson as well,
To hitch our wagon to a star.

We need to join the two in one,
The happy and the serious air.
Ah, what of good might not be done
By progeny of such a pair !

The age demands a nobler race
Than habits now this whirling Ball :
Be ours the Problem Vast to face,
Be ours to answer to the Call.

INWARD FIRES

My heart would sing for joy !
A friendly hand is reached
And lights earth's dull annoy !
Kindness is at me flung
Better than song e'er sung
Or sermon ever preached.

'T is not the gift I prize :
It is the heart behind.
O men and women ! rise
To understand how more
Is love than golden ore !
Too long men's souls are blind.

With nobleness meet all !
Thou hast undreamed return
In lifting feet that fall,
In rescuing the faint.
No artist hand can paint
The fires that inward burn.

And inward fires alone
Are those that warm us long.
Nought outward can atone
For sinking in the sea
Love's opportunity ! . . .
Thus sings my heart its song.

SAGE AND CLOWN

I saw two men as I walked up town :
One a "sage," men said, — and the other a "clown."

I

The sage had just come from the halls of debate,
Where his "wisdom and courage" had "saved the
State."

Yet I saw him just now, with self-confident grin,
At doors where true wisdom and strength ne'er
go in.

The crowd at his heels was surging thick,
And he, in his pride, with a gold-headed stick,
Was reviewing again, with much flourish in air,
How well he had "captured the senators" there.
"And they voted at last," said this keen politician,
"Not according to theirs, but to my volition !
I ever can vanquish the men who 'think'!"—
And then he moved inward to "take a drink";
And, stumbling in turning, he tripped o'er a child,
And greeted him harshly, with threatenings wild.

This, one of the men whom I saw up town :
With "the brain of a sage"—and the heart of a
clown.

II

Quick struggling forward, with look of alarm,
Then saw I the other, just come from his farm.
That a man thus rude to a child could be,
From his cheek drove his soul's calm ecstasy.
His brow wore a frown such as one before
Must have worn who the sorrows of many bore
While helpless the harshness of men to retrieve :
Yet his eyes'-light was love, as when angels grieve.
The babe he uplifted from where he lay crushed,
And with words of endearment his sobbings hushed.
In his strong arms tenderly bore he the child,
And pointed where high, golden clouds were piled,
And bade him hear bird-songs in yonder trees
And list to the croon in the springtime breeze.

This, the other of two whom these rhymings would
gauge :
With "the brain of a clown"—and the heart of a
sage.

THREE QUATRAINS

I

SELF-ILLUMINED

What if the sun be darkened?
Eyes shall be hopeful still!
Souls in themselves are torches
And light what realms they will.

II

WORDS AND DEEDS

Words! ah, words! 'T is easy writing
Of the ardor men should feel:
But 't is harder, Paris, smiting
Armed Achilles in the heel.

III

THE DEVIL OF DRINK

Of all the devils in time or space,
The devil that has the smallest grace
Is the devil that steals away man's wit
And leaves him but shame in place of it.

DREAM - COUNSEL

[1890]

I dreamed of you, last night,
 Brother and friend,—
And all the sky was light
 And without end !
With wisdom you were fraught,
 Companion mine ;
And, joyous, I was taught
 In things divine.

I came to you in care,
 From wearying mart :
We parted light as air,
 And glad of heart.
Where disappointment's pain
 Had weighed me low,
You changed the evening rain
 To sunrise-glow.

Where I — because my strife
 For Truth and Day
Seemed fruitless, and my life
 But thrown away —
Was downcast and in tears,
 With cheering voice
You banished all my fears,
 And cried “ Rejoice !

“Rejoice! it is the *quest*,
'T is not the art
Of *gaining* ends that best
Fulfils life's part.
What though for thee the rain,
The briar and burr?
Oh, surely not in vain
Thy strugglings were.

“Through years thy aim, thy call,
Has been for things
Exalted over all
That ‘Comfort’ sings.
'Truth,' 'Duty,' 'Good,' thy words,
And 'Boldness' too,
Beyond what common herds
Yet ever knew.

“In peace, then, sleep, this night,
O troubled heart!
Though low, yet is thy plight
The better part.
And when at last immured
In earth for rest,
Thy soul shall be assured
The strife was best.”

So spake you to me, friend,
Within my dream,
Showing the nobler end
To *be*, not *seem*.

Content, then, I, to dare,
Without success !
Though poverty my share,
I 've blessedness.

CYPRESS - CROWNED

To-day the winds of March are wild.
The swallows huddle 'neath the shore ;
Their wings are still — they cannot fly.
But yonder, whirled about the sky,
The gulls are circling, o'er and o'er :
The gull is Ocean's passive child.

The winds of Fate adversely blow.
My friends and fellows do not sing ;
They sing but when the waves are calm.
I look not always for the palm,
I take what laurels Fate may bring :
With cypress crowned at times I go.

FORELOOKING

[College Hill, Midsummer, 1879]

I sit beside my window here
And greet the breaking day.
The air is calm, the sky is clear,
And yonder shines the Bay !

Along the silvery rim of light
Which marks the ocean's edge,
Fair far-off slanting wings of white
Sail slow beyond the ledge.

Beyond the ledge of towering rocks
Which mark the heights of Lynn,
They sail to where the Equinox
Shall howl with awful din !

Oh stay at home, ye stately ships !
Oh stay at home as I,
Nor sail to meet but sure eclipse
Beneath an angry sky !

The wandering thought, the impatient heart,
The discontented soul,
At best can know of life but part,
And not the rounded whole.

But ah ! ye cannot stay ! — e'en now
Your sails are seaward set :
E'en now above your burdened bow
The fluttering sea-gulls fret.

And soon I too must hence away,
To skirt uncharted shores !
Already in my ears the spray
Of ocean conflict roars.

'T is well ! 't is well, ye stately ships !
Ye were not made for calm !
Your keels were laid to bear to lips
That hunger, Eastern balm.

'T is well no port of listless peace
Enshields your slothful sail :
The ship that gains the Golden Fleece
Must dare the Euxine gale.

'T is well, O heart, no life of ease
Before thee opens fair !
That perfect life would fail to please
Which breathed but softer air.

'T is not when zephyrs kindly blow,
And calmly, sweetly steal ;
When waters musically flow,
And laugh along the keel ;

'T is in the dashing of life's wave,
And in the sudden shock;
'T is when the soul, though stout and brave,
Is ground as on the rock,

That life's objective port is neared,
Its noblest courses run,
And souls of men the straightest steered
To Isles of Inward Sun.

ZEAL

To Be! To Do! To have the zeal to climb
O'er all the shocks of Fate to zones sublime!
To know that Time's successes,—praise and blame,—
Are transient fires however fierce they flame;
That soon and late are equal,—death and birth,—
And love's sweet dominance alone of worth.
That toil and struggle and pain's agony
Are nothing if the inner eye but see!
To realize, though cumbered in earth's ooze,
That there are heights with ever vaster views
To which the soul is hastening, freed from strife!—
This is the spirit's pole-star — this is life.

THROUGH THE SUNSET SEA

[From College Hill]

The day is done :
The imperial Sun
Is sinking, now his course is run,
Behind the hills of Arlington.

Through purple mist
I view the tryst
The sunbeams keep with the clouds they kissed
While descending the Vale of Amethyst.

Through amber haze
I view the blaze
Forth streaming in red level rays
Over hillside paths and forest ways.

As Moses' rod,
In the Story of God,
Was lifted where the Israelites trod,
That through watery walls they might walk dry
shod,—

So the Sun's last blaze,
These autumn days,
Its rod of lurid enchantment lays
Where the Mystic's crimson current plays ! . . .

O people of old !
Into Egypt sold,
Ye there, as the Wonder Book has told,
Were oppressed till your hearts in dust were rolled !

Yet ye did not despair,
But from Pharaoh's snare
Escaped by the Red Sea beach laid bare,
Into Canaan's fertile, kindlier air.

O sunset glow
On the river below,
Where I watch the shadows swerve and grow,—
Your secret message I seem to know !

As I gaze and dream,
Your waters seem
To part like that ancient fabled stream ;—
Life's hungers are ever the same and supreme !

Each heart — like the Jews —
To be led would choose
From a land where doubts and fears abuse,
To a land where faith all fear subdues.

The prizes are mean
That intervene :
Be sundered ! divided ! O vapory screen !
And give us to walk unscathed between.

AFTER A WEEK WITH A WOOD- CHOPPER

[Winchendon, Massachusetts, August, 1890]

Ah ! in this wilding solitude
'T is easy to believe in good !

Brother, you better knew than I —
Happy whose roof is but the sky !
'T is truth, what Homer, Bryant, sang —
The groves to God with praise first rang.
You call me from the city's din
In pity for my fight with "sin,"
Asking if what to God I owe
I can pay better than with hoe !

Bismillah ! have I so mistook ?
Flee "platform" for a pruning-hook ?
Yet haply you're not far astray !
Here ! I will help you rake your hay, —
Watching, as from your stony walls
The frisking chipmunk gayly calls ;
Heark'ning, delighted, as the breeze
Chants through your oak and chestnut trees, —

While off Monadnock's towering sides,
Into my heart, deep calmness slides.

'T is truth, what ancient poets tell ;
Moses and Jesus worshiped well :
In rose-illumined bush the first,
The other where the lily burst.
And joyance in the fields, ev'n yet,
May better help man pay "God's debt"
Than toiling in the city's waste
With New Philosophy and paste,
Patching mankind afresh each hour
With Social Science's wet flour.

In woodland deep, with axe or hoe,
The breath of health and peace we know ;
While only cark and thankless care
Are found in the uneasy air
Where metaphysics swells in dykes,
Leaks endlessly, but seldom strikes
Into the current fresh and real
Suggested by man's New Ideal.

Happy the man whose wants are few,
And ever met, however new,
By the deep, ample stores that hide
In Nature's simple woodland-side.
Wretched, alas ! who constant delve
Only their souls to bind and shelve ;

While wealthy they, though low their rank,
For whom sleep moonbeams on some bank.
For them no surer "bank" can be,
Nor richer with prosperity;
For, kneeling by the stream and sod,
At least they may be sure of God.

AT THE SUMMIT

All wearied in the search for truth,
Nor ever nearer to the goal,
I turn the magnet from the Pole
And laugh once more as loud as youth.

O human heart! insatiate
To solve the secret of thy birth
And know thou shalt survive the earth!—
Though centuries still baffled wait!

Enfranchised from the vain pursuit
I greet with joy each breaking day,
And when the sunset fades in gray
Make melody with voice and lute.

At least I live and love, this hour!
And meadow, sea, and sky are fair,

And fellow-workers everywhere
Are battling for man's larger dower.

Man's energies with Earth's keep time ;
High human needs must still be met ;
And simplest task, to duty set,
Is evermore a deed sublime.

So, hoping, singing, toiling on,
I waive pursuit of skyey birth,
To smooth rough pathways of the earth
Where feet must tread when I am gone.

POEMS OF LIVING

II. SONNETS

TO PRIZE LIFE'S HARDNESS

To prize life's hardness ! find delight in ways
That scale the hill-crest and the loftier air ;
To rouse some bird-song in the desolate days
When winter holds the forest frozen and bare ;
To wear the cypress as though laurel-wreathed ;
To lure a smile from brows that darkly frown ;
To say to traits of evil, age-bequeathed,
“ Ye may be blotted out ! ”— and fight them down.
To take what Heaven or Circumstance has sent
And bend it to the making of a man ! —
This is the aim whereto my days are blent,
My fond endeavor, waking vision, plan.
O life ! O earth ! I prize you for your smart,
And for your rudeness I am glad at heart.

HOW SING'ST THOU, THEN ?

The daily round of life — man's broken faith,
The shock of accident, pain's bitter smart,
Love's hunger, disappointment's mocking wraith,
Bereavement's anguish, sudden passion's dart —
O hopeful soul of mine ! the daily round
Of life for thee is no less hard and black
Than other mortals in their passage sound :
How sing'st thou, then, — so often on the rack !
And soul makes answer : Would it help my state
To hail Despair ? to curse ? or knock the breast ?
Nay ! but a song will direst ill abate,
And bring the burdened heart unbounded rest.
Each threatening ill I boldly turn to greet,
And drown its discord in my music sweet.

JOY IN ONE'S WORK

If in thy daily toil thou hast not joy,
Oh study to attain some happier way !
So few life's needs, why languish and grow gray
At tasks which serve thee but for soul's annoy !
If work be play, no questioning alloy
Of "high" or "low" need desecrate thy day ;
The roof as grandly rear, the furrow lay,
As carve a statue for a nation's toy !

But make thy moil a ministry of glee—
Of zeal, and mind's delight, and heart's repose,
Obedient to the Voice that lures from sadness.
No slave's mean service Nature asks of thee,
But spirit's blossoming to leaf and rose,
And fragrance making night and day a gladness.

THE MAN ON THE MOUNTAIN

When to the mountain of enfranchised soul
I came at length, and scanned its sunlit way,
No longer might I, like a child at play,
Rove listless where life's garden foot-hills roll.
Yet peak on peak so towered that pathless Whole,
It seemed some loftier power must with me stray,
And brace my heart, and be my strength and stay,
If ever I should gain that longed-for goal.
Then just above me I beheld a man
Whose face was luminous as morning sky,
Whose brow was freed from every earthly ban,
Whose arms outstretched allured me wistful nigh.
“Come up,” he said, “and dare these heights with me;
I am the nobler man you yet shall be.”

HOURS OF INSIGHT

How blest am I that often in my dreams
 Come lofty thoughts to waking hours unknown !
 Airs as of mountain-tops are round me blown,
 And soul upflames with more than sunrise-beams.
Imagination circles ; insight gleams
 Unwontedly, with love and purpose sown ;
 And spirit's blossoms — in Elysium grown —
 Allure my heart along unfailing streams.
O waking hours with pains and passions filled ;
 Poor human strivings for the things that pass !
 Rise, soul, above them, to serener heights ;
Thy dreams forthshadow life's high goal, if willed
 And followed ! Soon Night's visions fade, alas !
 But Day's high conquests offer long delights.

MY FEATHERED PREACHER

All day my maples in the blast have bowed ;
 The sleet howls lustily through shivering limbs ;
 Yet e'en though ice the creaking branches rims,
 There with high hardihood he hovereth proud —
Busy and bustling ! Full and sweet and loud
 His warbling cheer the wintry whistling dims.
 Earth's crystal bowl with song he overbrims,
 Making an altar of its snowy shroud.

Soul of my soul ! for secret, sheltered nook
Must thou forever pray when blasts are nigh
And howling passions, seeking thee, stream by ?
Nay, O my soul, in the gale's teeth dare look !
Still fighting, sing ! lift undismayed thy din :
Only undaunted hearts scale heaven and win.

IDEAL BEAUTY

Ideal Beauty ! — seers' exhaustless theme
Which hath absorbed their eager spirits quite !
Not beauties merely — of the lustrous night
And iridescent day ; but loftier dream —
Beauty embracing beauties. Fair the gleam
Of earliest dawn ; a purifying sight
The heavens all diamonded : but more that Light —
The heavens' Heaven — of worlds and souls the
Beam.
O radiant hill-tops ! unto you mine eyes !
O budding violets ! all my sense ye thrall !
O human comrades ! heart of me ye thrill !
But Beauty uncreate in earth or skies,
Eternal and divine, — soul's ceaseless call, —
To thee my prayer, my passion, and my will !

THE PATH

I

Shall I not bear my portion of life's pain,—
 Of mind, — of body, — and withhold all cry ?
 Life hath evolved through pain. The studious eye
 Finds here the path of Being's highest gain.
 Earth's agonies have been earth's bliss, not bane.
 Then spring the torture, if I grow thereby,
 Or so the hope of myriads doth not die
 And nobler blessedness on earth have reign !
 Many have been whose flesh hath hailed the torch,
 Whose souls have welcomed contumely's ban,
 Devoutly chanting Freedom's songs the while,
 Making the gates of martyrdom a porch
 To highest Heaven — the growing good of Man !
 Shall I not also bear, and, bearing, smile ?

II

The Path ! The Path ! It has been one of pain,
 But must it be so always ? Must the rise
 Of men and nations tow'rds the spirit's skies
 Be ever only under Sorrow's reign ?
 Shall not Man's growing insight yet attain
 A thornless pathway up to Being's prize,
 And Soul's revealing airs anoint Man's eyes
 Till pangless harmony with Good lies plain ?

O happy Age, when Ignorance lies dead,
 When Want and Greed have fled their noisome
 place,
 And Passion, thought-redeemed, seeks heights
 above !
 In this sweet Path, O Earth, thy sons be led,
 Till pain's long rule shall pass, and strength and
 grace
 Be won through sight of Beauty and through Love.

THE VICTOR¹

So calmly, quietly he walked, that men,
 Unless they knew the inward of his days,
 Might feel that he was born for naught but praise,
 And that the native sunlight tipt his pen.
 But in his path the lion had his den,
 And strangling serpents hissed along his ways ;
 Early and late the woodland was ablaze
 For him who loved the coolness of the fen.
 O Strongheart ! not in vain you bore the strife !
 The lion and the serpent at your word
 Crouched harmless and the flames died impotent.
 We who know all are braver for your life,
 And daily, since your summons we have heard,
 Shall bear more nobly, walk more reverent.

¹ Written of Henry M. Simmons (1841-1905), author of "The Unending Genesis" and "New Tables of Stone."

SPIRALS

Daily we mount them all, from Pit to Dome !
Not Dante's circling choirs, nor Raphael's,
Nor all the inmates of all heavens and hells
In fantasies of Asia, Egypt, Rome,
Surpass the hordes that make each soul their home.
The clank of chains, the chime of silvery bells —
Shame, Passion, Song — in turn each sinks and
swells :
Now faith soars high, now all seems froth and foam.
O fateful circle where I most part fare,
Dim Middle Region, — Purgatorial fog, —
Oppressed by equal hopefulness and doubt !
At times I fain would wing through clearer air,
Yet joyful move I, mindless of each clog,
On to what end Eternity works out.

HEART'S TREASURES

On winter meadow once, a little child
In digging 'neath the snow as fancy led
Unroofed a tiny streamlet's frozen bed —
Then danced at treasures there, in joyance wild :
Rare icy arabesques, rich gems up-piled —
Encrystaled wonders ! But his bosom bled,
And sore he wept, as day grew warm o'erhead,
To see them vanish in the radiance mild !

That child of old — long since he grew a man ;
But ne'er has season flown — fall, winter, spring —
That magic streams have not heart's treasures
dealt :
Sweet friends, dear children ; power to dream and
plan ;
The earth's fresh face ; and — yea ! — the faith to
sing
Instead of weep when life's dear joys swift melt.

AND LAST OF ALL I LEARN IT

And last of all I learn it ! Yea, O soul,
Have patience not alone with those around —
Poor will-less beings sin and habit bound :
With wealth that offers but a piteous dole
Though earth's faint children pant for happier goal ;
With statesmen paltering on patriot ground ;
With churchmen silent though God's trumpets
sound :
With all who fail of nearer perfect whole !
Have patience also — full, serene, and free,
Lasting and deep, and with as gracious part
As that thou showest every wayward elf —
When thou hast failed to grandly do and be,
And failing, feelest sorrow at thy heart,
Have patience, oh, have patience with — thyself.

FOILS

I

“I am the master of my fate,” one says,
And adds, “I am the captain of my soul.”
Bravely a man rehearsed these words, in days
When he was young and fortunate and whole.
From virtuous ancestry his blood was calm ;
Sisters and brothers — friends — were his a store ;
Thorns were afar from him, and pine and palm
Fragrantly breathed for him on summer shore.
Fate took his wealth ; a sister died in shame :
Honor he scoffed at when his pride was bled.
One loved him still, and would have borne his name,
But while she donned the orange-blooms he fled.
A new face shone while pealed his marriage-bell :
It beckoned — and he followed it to hell.

II

“Why should I strive ? What boon can I attain !
Fate had conditioned me ere I was born !”
Such were the manacles of damning pain
Another life from earliest years had worn.
His mother was a woman of the street,
His “father”— she nor he had ever known ;
The alleys were his nursery ; and sweet
To him, as to a dog, a wayside bone.

His country called — ah, here was chance to die !
He flew on savage wings and met the foe.
His victory gave him courage, and his eye
Sparkled with hope the noble only know.
Back to the world he came, and toiled elate,
And died an honored Minister of State.

PLATITUDES

The froth of pleasure quickly sinks to lees,
Its taste soon brackish on the dullest tongue.
Only the highest strife brings highest ease ;
From self alone is selfhood's victory wrung.
In every prophet-path rude crosses lift,
And nails are ready upon every hand ;
Spear-heads and vinegar are all earth's gift,
And quarreling the hooting rabble stand.
Who seek for blessedness need only drink ;
Want much, you thirst, however fast you pour.
Seek peace, all heaven is yours before you think ;
All that makes hell you knew full well before.
Out on such cursèd platitudes ! but, — mark, —
The truth they hold makes Being bright or dark.

NOON IN THE PRINTING-SHOP

'T is noontide. For an hour the workers rest
Amid the quiet where but now there rang
The fugue of type and planer, presses' clang,
And all the concords of the printer's quest.
Around me suddenly, in beauty drest,
Rise forest aisles! The notes of birds that sang
Long past, again I hear; the wild fruit's tang
Again I taste, in dewy coverts blest.
Imagination! power hast thou to take
From toil its sting, and unto age impart
The vanished fire of youth's first morning-glow!
Happy who learn thy simple law, and slake
Through charm of inner eye and loving heart
Earth's direst griefs in mind's rich overflow.

TRUE LIFE OF US

True life of us, where art thou hid away!
This ceaseless moiling in the shop and mart,
This thoughtless social mocking of the heart,
Which all-absorb our waking, year and day,
Cannot be life! At times at evening-gray—
Faint symbol of night's solveless counterpart
Which dimly waits — from drowsiness we start,
So fair the dream that comes, and cry, "Oh, stay!"

Perchance we first time really see a flower !
Some inward grandeur — unsuspect — makes cry !
Or others' nobleness enchains our view !
In such informing and exalting hour
Earth's old futilities pass downcast by,
And life on sudden takes eternal hue.

THE NAMELESS RECORD

In Rome a chiseled marble told a tale
Of noble deeds and high unselfish life —
Though from the tablet hammer-blows and knife
Had all obliterated, as with hail,
The great one's name ! Old centuries wan and pale
Which met blood's Nemesis in awful strife
Of Goths and Vandals — years with horror rife —
Beheld it, and it weighed them in its scale
And found them wanting. For not Pompey's name,
Nor Cæsar's, ever filled this space with fear,
But hero's crowned with more than monarch's bays :
Some Greatheart's, blotting here his sculptured fame,
As knowing lives of selflessness austere
Are lived from love of love, not love of praise !

A³_d RADIANT YOUTH I KNEW

I

A radiant youth I knew. His glowing face
 Was like a blushing rose of dawn's own tints ;
 It scarcely seemed he ought to dare life's race
 Where coarser feet plowed deep their heedless
 prints.

I loved him for his nobleness, and tried
 To dream his coming great career for Man.
 "O Fate ! remove all obstacles," I cried,
 "And in his path uprear no evil ban."

But tempters came — one temptress most of all,
 Who kissed his lips and hung upon his neck,
 And lured him to her worship — sweet to gall —
 Till on life's shore he lay a battered wreck.

On crags Caucasian, vultures no more spare
 A bound Prometheus than a blundering hare.

II

Yet "all things work for good" ! O Knowledge bold,
 'T is thus to-day with no less cheering tone
 You speak than saint or prophet spake of old,
 Soft lustre flashing through our weeping zone.
 My noble one lies dead in godlike youth !
 Such powers as his had rescued half a world !
 And yet I must not doubt : 't is surely truth
 That naught in Nature to the Void is hurled.

Himself he could not save — will he save others ?

His sacrifice — will it have aught of force ?

While yet he lies unhearsed, among his brothers

A myriad boldly venture the same course ! . . .

A few — beweeping self — may pause an hour,

And on his coffin fling — like me — a flower.

SELF - MADE CROSSES

After the palm and cheer — the scoff and cross !

But his were love and innocence who bore.

Ah ! what of those, the wilful, 'mid the roar

Of pitiless ills that mark their pain and loss !

Sinning, transgressing, they seem to wear the crown ;

Joyous they laugh, and dream " 'T is victory."

Ah ! but the awful sequence of their glee

Drags them and strips them, fainting, shuddering,
down.

There — the world's helper, pierced by scorners who

With evil hands uplifted him, the pure :

Here — the maimed throng whose mangled lives
endure

Only the nails themselves drove thoughtless
through.

Ah, even than that Central Scaffold drear,

Sadder the crosses for ourselves we rear !

CAUSATION

She played, an innocent darling, 'mid the flowers ;
 Hid ivy foully poisoned her. She sang,
A child, on forest edge, — till suddenly rang
 Her agony from bee-stings 'mid the bowers.
Grown to fair maidhood, golden were her hours !
 Love beatific, holy, filled her breast.
No Angel warned her — why reveal the rest ?
 Above her wave-lapt corse no marble towers.
Happy and prosperous one, by Fortune crowned !
 Thee doth thy "virtue" keep ? And was it "sin"
That wrecked her of her all ? Nay, world, begin
 More wisely Nature's secret depths to sound.
Man needs a knowledge not yet taught in schools.
Seek out yet more her laws. Causation rules.

HEREDITY

Avaunt, ye myriad ancestors of mine
 Whose olden deeds persist and hinder me !
No longer I accept your sovereignty ;
 In sole autocracy I rise and shine.
If ye were buccaneers, I will incline
 To acts that shall redeem your perfidy ;
If ye perchance were tyrants, I will be
 To all my fellows helpful and benign.

In whatsoever ye were base or sad,
I flout and overcome you one and all
And rear henceforth a standard fair and high. . . .
Yet whence, O Sires, received I good with bad ! —
To what staunch soul, I wonder, am I thrall
In thus determining I will be I !

SELF - GRATULATION

When I consider all my path of life —
The slight estate wherewith my years began ;
The baffling but indomitable strife
To mould from crumbling clay a lofty man ;
When I recall the goblins of the soul
Which hoary Credence fastened on my youth —
The Past's rude superstitions taking toll
Of ardent years which else had served the Truth ;
When still, in memory, I front the wall
With which Convention blocked my hopeful way,
And feel again, as at the earlier call,
The smart of strokes in Freedom's holy fray —
I marvel at the unattained no more,
But at the much, though little, of my store.

ACROSS THE LINE: AT FIFTY

Into the river of my life still flow
Streams of delight from youth's unfailing springs ;
By every flower that blows and bird that sings
My heart is thrilled as in the long ago.
All aspirations youthful dreamers know —
For Man — for self ! the joy that service brings ;
Faith without folly ; honors void of stings :
These quenchless orbs still keep my skies aglow.
Mine also the amazement of the child
At War's persistent shame — earth's sorrow old ;
And at men's strife to hoard, who need but bread.
O rills of blessedness divinely mild,
Into my being's tide perpetual rolled !
From your sweet founts no stain, no grief, I dread.

ULTIMA THULE

Now cease to toil ? Nay, this for me not yet,
Thou youth who deemest growing age a bar
That hinders sight of new-ascendant star
And dulls heroic zeal to soft regret.

High failure or high conquest doth but whet,
For noble souls, the will to climb afar
Where splendors of all fine endeavors are —
Transcendent orbs which, rising, never set !

Then pity not, dear youth, the growing gray
Which threatens me — no gray afflicts the soul !
No vision yet of Utmost Isle is mine —
Nor ever shall be ! for the sacred day
Will come unomened when I reach the goal ;
My last step only shall attain the shrine.

THE LOVELIEST ANGEL

Time was — Time is. Our choice when years were
young
Was Michael — he of flaming sword and brow,
Whose brandished blade, and high, imperious
“Now!”
Submission’s cry from recreant Error wrung.
Then thralled was soul by songs high bards have
sung,
And Gabriel, God’s courier to endow
The earth with Knowledge, chose we, seeking how
To lift mankind to Heaven with luring tongue.
Now night advances : strife and teaching cease.
Ascends the star of dreams when day is done !
Of all the Angels, choose we Azrael !
His name is symbol of a longed-for peace :
Not hooded is his face, but like the sun,
And in his hand the immortal asphodel.

POEMS OF NATURE

I. MISCELLANEOUS

IN TREETOP LAND

I see you, robin, on your perch
High up amid the maple there.
What hall of music, couch of ease,
Not built by hands, soft rocked by breeze,
Could earth show fairer to my search
Than swaying hammock in the air,
In Treetop Land !
Unmindful of the hoarding strife
Which sums the sum of human life,
Ten cherries are enough for you :
You only ask a plum or two —
And Treetop Land.

The sunshine streams at break of day
And through your leafy lattice weaves.
The liquid air invites your wing —
What wonder that you sing and sing !
Your busiest toil is busiest play ;
No envy your existence grieves
In Treetop Land.

A prayer I breathe — an eager cry !
“O Mother Nature, till I die
Dear hours and days vouchsafe to me
Of simple, care-free liberty —
Like Treetop Land !”

“A BREATH FROM THE FIELDS”

[To ——, who sent to me, in the city, a box of spring blossoms as
“a breath from the fields”]

“A breath from the fields !” . . .
Ah me,
Could I paint the vision I see !
For under the spell of these flowers
The thoroughfare, busy and hot,
And the office, and work, are forgot ;
And these granite and marble towers
Quick vanish away, and quick
The whole desert of fiery brick.

“A breath from the fields !” . . .
All day
My spirit has languished to stray
From the City of Turmoil. And now,
On the magical carpet of Thought,
On the pinions these blossoms have brought,

I am wandering where the bough
Of the elm with the maple blends,
And the song of the robin ascends.

“A breath from the fields !” . . .

The sweets
Of a myriad marguerites
Are flooding with incense the air,
And a dream my heart besets
As I gaze on the violets —
A dream and a splendor rare —
Of a brook where the bloodroot drinks,
And the laughter of bobolinks.

“A breath from the fields !” . . .

I catch
A view of the leafy thatch
That waves on the meadow’s marge.
I roam in the shadows of trees
Like those in Hesperides !
And I pluck from the branches the large,
White, beautiful apple-sprays,
Till the pain in my heart allays.

“A breath from the fields !” . . .

Thank God
For the friend who kneeled on the sod
To gather such glory for me !
The blossoms will fade ; but depart
Shall they never from out of my heart :

There, forever, their beauty shall be,
Like the blossoms that gladden the eyes
Of the dwellers in Paradise.

DAFFODILS

Within the winding woodland aisles
Which stately crown our northward hills,
A myriad wilding daffodils
Bloom gladly where the sunbeam smiles.

How they in such unwonted earth
Found home and blossomed, none may know ;
But buds of a more beauteous glow
Ne'er, out of poet's brain, had birth.

Anigh their vernal, mossy bed
The pine stands whispering to the spruce ;
The stripèd squirrel — gay recluse !—
Swings in the branches overhead.

Around their prize the wondering bees,
To such soft sweetness all unused,
Buzzingly gather till infused
With honey of Hesperides !

Thither the Naiads also come ;
Thither the fairies fly in haste :

Never more humble courtiers graced
A Beauty's court in Christendom.

Even the lady-ferns and sedges,
Turning in sweet surprise to greet
The beauty nestling at their feet,
Give the pale strangers welcome pledges.

Thither I, too, my steps retrace,
Seeking the inspiration there ;
Meeting within that charmèd air
A benediction face to face.

SONATA OF THE DRAGON-FLY

[The dragon-fly flew in at my open office window in Boston one day in summer, a few moments after the receipt by me of a letter from a friend at Vineyard Haven. In the letter the writer of the same, by a strange coincidence, had playfully wished himself some winged creature in order that he might fly in at my city window and whisper in my ear the delights of his rural and seaside home !]

I come, I come from distant shores ! —
From where the wide Atlantic roars
 Around my island home ;
Where pebbly strands unbroken lie,
Ringed round with spray-cloud mystery,
 Ringed round with silvery foam !

I come from where the trembling pine
Chants chorus to the heaving brine,
 Chants sonnets to the sea ;
From where the myriad-leavèd elm,
On brink of wide Neptunian realm,
 Breathes soulful melody.

I come from meadowy retreats,
Where violets and marguerites
 The livelong day repose ;
Where jauntily the golden-rod
And tufted stalks of asters nod,
 Mingled with sweetbrier rose.

I come from where the rippling brook
Flows free through many a sylvan nook,
 Then leaps into the sun ;
Where ferns and grasses guard the brink
Where butterflies descend to drink,
 Their glad life just begun.

I come from where the oriole's nest
Hangs hidden beyond the eager quest
 Of hawk or schoolboy hand ;
From where the yellow-bird's golden hue
Flits by with a flash across the blue
 Of the high arch overspanned.

I come from where at eventide
The stars in majestic beauty glide,
 Outvying Arabia's days ;

Where nightly the firefly's delicate lamp
Gleams bright on the background cold and damp
 Of the furry, tasseled maize.

I come, I come from distant shores ; —
From where the wide Atlantic roars
 Around my island home ;
Where pebbly strands unbroken lie,
Ringed round with spray-cloud mystery,
 Ringed round with silvery foam !

BODY AND SPIRIT

The fair October sky is clear,
 The summer haze has fled ;
The glory of the woods is near,
 The maple's leaves are red.

The cloudless morning sun is mild,
 The fern its fragrance yields.
“ Come out into the woods, my child,
 Come out into the fields ! ”

' T is thus I hear my Mother speak, —
 My Mother, Nature dear ;
And while her breezes fan my cheek
 I linger still to hear.

“ These perfect days were never meant
For toil of hand or brain,”—
But made to roam the continent
Or sail the misty main.

“ The world is too much with us.” — Yea,
For all men but a few
Earth’s toil and strain from day to day
Are life’s sole residue !

O God ! for what the sun and sky ?
For what the leafy wood ?
Shall men forever live and die
And call the worse the good ?

But ah ! — myself — myself am bound
Within the city’s moil !
I cannot break, myself, the round
Of endless daily toil !

In vain the beckoning sumach calls,
In vain the rose is red ;
While labor’s mocking hour-hand crawls
The aster’s gold is dead !

Ah well ! my mind is still my own ;
My heart no fetters gyve :
My soul is monarch of a throne
Which through all years shall thrive.

To toil my body Fate may urge,—
But unconfined and free
My spirit roams the mountain's verge
And sails the sunlit sea.

MYSTIC RIVER

[1881]

O miniature river ! winding free
Through widening meadows to wider sea,
Beautiful, beautiful art thou to me !

Men look on thy narrow wave, and laugh ! . . .
Little they know of the cup I quaff !
And what carest thou for their idle chaff !

Thou art narrow, and sluggish, and muddy oft,
And thy margin is oozy, and low, and soft ;
It is no wonder that men have scoffed :

For men are thoughtless, through and through ;
And men are idle and sluggish too,
And they laugh at themselves when they laugh at you.

Thou art wider at times — when the upward tide
Brings a torrent of brine from the ocean's side,
And seaweed and kelp on thy current glide.

Then pleasure-barks on thy surface float,
And fair lips wreath into joyous note
While fair hands hasten each onward boat.

Thou art wider still when the tide comes in
With a rush and a roar from the sea, and a din
Like that on the beach when the storms begin.

Then over thy wave the sea-gull dips,
And screams to his fellows, while slowly drips
The salt sea spray from his pinions' tips !

And thou takest thy birth in lakes that are large,
With villages fair on their prosperous marge,—
And yet almost as lone as when swept by the barge

Of the Indian hunters now lying asleep
Where the willow bends low and the larches weep
On the westering slopes of Walnut steep ;—

In lakes that are quiet, and calm, and still,
Where the bobolink's laugh and the thrush's trill
Re-echo o'er forest and meadow and hill.

But, river ! if thou in thy breadth wert as great
As the Stream of the South where it pours through
the gate
Of golden Brazil, and runs separate

For leagues in the brine, ever fresh, ever pure ;
If thou in precipitous depths didst endure
Dark caverns and cliffs such as oceans immure ;

If thou in the circling embrace of thy banks
Held gardens by hundreds, and castles in ranks,
And vineyards like those in the land of the Franks;

If thou, with Euphrates and Gihon, didst run
By the Garden of God, and didst mirror the sun
As when first over Eden the dawn had begun;—

Ev'n then thou couldst never peace richer impart,
Nor ever be dearer, O stream, in my heart,
Than thou in thy slumber and sluggishness art!

For oft when my bosom with conflict was torn,
Thou, placid, hast crooned, "Child, for peace thou
wast born!"—
Till thy calmness my strife of its passion has shorn.

And sacred to me, doubly, trebly, thy tide,
For the friends now far sundered and scattered world
wide
With whom in my youth I have walked by thy side.¹

¹ Walnut Hill was the earlier name of the present College Hill (Tufts College). During the years since this poem was written the old Indian burial-ground has disappeared, its site being now occupied by residences—in some of which, if the belief of a number of the inhabitants of the neighborhood is well founded, the sorrowful spirits of the long-departed aborigines make themselves from time to time manifest in rebuke of the desecration by the white man of their eternal camping-ground! The Mystic lakes, also, wear no longer so completely the aspect of solitude as in the years previous to 1880. The dam and lock in the river, at Medford, now holding the upper reaches of the stream at flood, are of recent date.

SUNSHINE

“ Wohlauf! es ruft der Sonnenschein
Hinaus in Gottes freie Welt ! ”

— TIECK : *Zuversicht.*

O sluggish slumberer, awake! —

The sunlight calls thee!

Earth's sullen clods beneath thee quake ;
The promised buds of springtide break ;
The green sedge quivers by the lake.

No longer winter's gloom appalls thee, —
But out where birds and blossoms wake,
God's sunlight calls thee!

The bobolink beside the brook

Sings, never weary ;

The elms, that wings so long forsook,
Again for nests and joyance look ;
And where the snow-hung elder shook,
And sighed through all the winter dreary,
The robins, as in Æsop's Book,
Chant loud and cheery.

Within the woodland green and wild,
The fern is springing ;
And near the maiden-hair so mild,

And golden mosses high up-piled,
The violet, Nature's favorite child,
Its fragrance on the air is flinging.
How often hath its breath beguiled
 My heart to singing !

O weary soul, beset by toil
 From dawn till gloaming !
Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, flee the broil !
Forsake the city's ceaseless moil ;
Come out, and tread the tender soil
Of Beulah, where no footstep, roaming,
Fails of the priceless wine and oil
 Of Nature's foaming.

Pale students ! poring over books
 And musty Latin !
Shakespeare read sermons in the brooks !
Through far Ionian seas and nooks
Old Homer, godlike in his looks,
Roved singing of Earth's robe of satin !
And Virgil's shepherds timed their crooks
 To Nature's matin.

O aching feet ! enforced to tread
 Hot urban places !
That fain would wander, fain would wed
The velvet of some mossy bed !
Your pathway, as the Prophet said,

May sometime be through flowery spaces ;
Through meadows with the happy dead,
In heavenly places !

O sorrowing heart ! — for him, for her,
Who left thee weeping !
Canst thou not deem this wondrous stir
Of springtide leaf and gossamer
A mild angelic minister ?
This wakefulness, where all was sleeping,
Is it not Heaven's own messenger
To stay thy weeping ?

May not the clouds that roll afar
On life's horizon
Flee too, like winter's broken bar ?
And in their stead a glittering star
Arise, that æons shall not mar ?
This is the hope our heart relies on ; —
And such may be, when rolls ajar
Heaven's fair horizon.

P A N

Did some one say that Pan is dead ?

Then what was that sweet sound I heard
Which first I thought was song of bird,
But then perceived was far too sweet
For robin with it to compete ?—
I know that Pan not yet is fled !

If still you think 't was bird's refrain,
Oh, stand with me beside this tree ;
Oh, stand a moment silently,
And when the strain again rings out —
There ! hark ! Who sways that vine about !
Is that not Pan with dryad train ?

Persist you 't is but sun and shade ?
Why ! oaks' and maples' rustling limbs
Ne'er tuned such sweet outlandish hymns
As these dear olden runes that seem
The echo of some Attic dream.
No pipe but Pan's such sounds e'er made !

Nay, comrade, you are surely wrong.
Rare tones like these no purling brook
Made ev'n in loveliest forest nook.
Dear Pan himself is hidden there,
Enshrined within that leafy lair ;
'T is he that ripples thus in song.

You say it is a little child
With its companions playing there !
Red clover-blossoms in its hair,
Its mother crooning melodies !—
Ah ! that 's the gladdest thing there is,
If Pan indeed no more runs wild !

Yet what are birds and trees and brooks,
And what a child and mother fair,
But Nature sublime and rare
Outbursting into sweetest strain,
Compelling laughter, numbing pain !—
These all are Pan, as in the books !

POEMS OF NATURE

II. SONNETS

ONE WITH ALL

I love all changes of the earth and air !
A day of sleety turmoil is to me
A rare magnificence, and I could flee
Eager and happy to the storm-wind's lair.

When pounds the tempest through the hills all bare,
Or thunder cannonades the beating sea,
Spirit of Nature ! still I speed with thee,
Clinging triumphant in thy streaming hair.

Then comes a day amid the flowers and ferns,
When breathing zephyrs and low-murmuring bees
Speak Nature's mood a poppy-like repose.

The flame is mine with which rhodora burns,
The fragrance mine of scented herbs and trees,
And I am drop in every brook that flows.

IN SUBURBAN WOODS

How sifts the sunlight through these oaks outspread !
And through their boughs what flash of crimson
wings !
Each cup and fern a fragrant censer swings.
Earth's loveliness to me is daily bread.
At this rich board I bow my grateful head,
And eat and drink, the while my bosom sings,
Forgetting for an hour the thousand stings
Of yonder city — Palace of the Dead !
At every living tomb, or south or north,
The spirit, hearkening, heareth Nature chide :
“ O souls of men, to beauty why so slow !
Day's realm awaits you ! Lazarus, come forth ! ”
And then, to them that stand the grave beside :
“ Unbind their cerements ! Loose, and let them
go.”

SUNRISE IN CODMAN PARK

[Dorchester, Massachusetts]

From hilltop circled by the sleeping town
I seaward gaze where gleams the early day.
The mists still clothe the valley-lands in gray,
But harbor islands wear a gem-set crown.

Southward, the Blue Hill summits doff their frown,

Reflecting eagerly each new-born ray ;

While through the elms the robin to the jay

His gauntlet of ecstatic song throws down.

For me alone is this exalting bliss ?

For me alone these fugue-resounding walls

Which flush with beryl and with sapphire blaze ?

O slaggard souls, ye know not what ye miss

Who bring not sorrow to these sunrise-halls

To find it vanish in these notes of praise.

IN VACATION

Under my Bodhi-tree cross-legg'd I sit,

And meditate in silent, grateful glee.

Between me and the sunset swallows flit,

Swift-wing'd across the gorgeous tapestry.

Crimson and gold — all wonderful to see —

The west is gateway to unfathomed calm ;

Serenity from hill and rock and tree

Bathes my freed spirit in unwonted balm.

What wonder I respond with inward psalm !

What wonder earthly gauds seem poor and bare !

With marvels Nature meets my outstretched palm,

And smiles that I inhale this heavenly air.

“Oh why so slow,” she cries, “to seek my face,

When peace, in all earth’s quest, hath else no place !”

BY DARK OR LIGHT

Nature, by dark or light thy life I drink !
The midnight stars behold me as I gaze,
And smile in answer, hinting that the days
Are but Eternity's half-lumined brink.
The night is opportunity to think !
And soul's own inner orbs expand and blaze
When round the shepherd Pole the star-flocks graze
And fires of boreal Vulcans glow and shrink.
Yet when in eastern skies the steeds uprear
Which Phœbus urges to celestial flight,
The day brings eloquence night's lustre bars :—
The sheen of dewy meadows far and near,
The opal hills, the ocean's purple might,
And human faces lovelier than all stars.

ENCHANTED GROUND

I am a Parsee. Thee I praise, O Sun !
Squirrel nor thrush is earlier astir
Than I when, bursting through the upland fir,
I mount some steep to hail new Dawn begun.
And when the showery west, all diamond-spun,
Is pied with flame as dies Day's messenger,
I gaze still rapt,— Light's loyal worshiper,—
And hymn the hymns of priests in Babylon.

Omar ! the earth was all enchanted ground
To thee who sold thy rosary for wine —
The wine of Beauty, filling Nature's cup.
Thy temple's arch the sky alone could bound.
Scaling its walls, — no narrower worship mine, —
To Heaven each day I climb exultant up.

SO LIKE THE SPRING SHE STANDS

[Written of my Daughter]

Again we wander — she, my soul's delight,
And I, her dear companion, lover, friend —
To hilltops where the elms and maples send
Their first faint greenness through the landscape
bright.

The flicker calls us to pursue his flight ;
The robin welcomes us to join the trend
Of lavish life upspringing, and to spend
Improvidently on the ear and sight.

Once more, as when she plunged her infant hands
In wealth of Western prairies, — years between, —
We search and sing and know life still is sweet.
Yet now, dear girl ! so like the Spring she stands,
To gaze upon her fairness of eighteen
My eye forsakes the windflower at my feet.

THE EARTH AT PLAY

Acres of daises,— buttercups between,—
And over them the sunny Sunday sky!
Daisies as thick as stalks in fields of rye;
More buttercups than eyes before had seen
Though love had measured tenfold; spires of green
The gowans gay uptossing,— straight, awry,
O'erswung, upsoaring,— endless to the eye;
The yellow crowfoot hordes enmeshed serene.
I think if I could count those blooms afield,
Which yesterday the wanton breeze o'erswept
In billows white, green, golden, I could say
How many love-lights children's faces yield
When kisses greet them after they have slept,
And they go out to join the earth at play.

HILLS OF MORNING

I wake — and gaze. Behold! a mountain range
Which never from my window showed before!
What magic reared those precipices strange,
Adown whose depths vague avalanches pour!
The mighty mass — dim distances away —
Heaves on and on, an Adirondack pile.
My soul hangs worshipful, and fain would stay
To gaze where soars such marvel mile on mile.

But then I see, with heart that sudden sinks,
Vast slaty clouds are all my heavenly view !
My continent of towering summits shrinks
As streaming Day transmutes to gold the blue.
Yet, eyes, repine not ! on your sight was cast
Undreamed-of beauty, though so soon o'erpast.

COMRADES

I hear him calling — I must go awhile,
For compact we have made most true and strict.
When either hails, then ere the sun has nicked
Ten seconds on the oak-top's soaring dial,
The other — faithful in the loyal style
Of souls whose confidence was never tricked
By comrades proving dull or derelict —
Must answer through the woodland's leafy aisle.
Then shut, my Shakespeare, — Plato, you may wait ;
My cornfield, sun and rain may care for you ;
Sad world, an hour I leave you to your plight !
Ceaseless the cark of Body, Mind, and State,
While love's sweet fellowships are far and few.
He calls — I answer. “Here's Bob White !” “Bob
White !”

TO MY OLD WHEEL

Thousands of miles of richness ! lofty joy
Beyond what noblest verse might hope to swell !
Ungrateful, then, should I not strive to tell
The benediction of thy rare employ.
Through thee, Atlantic's edge hath been my toy ;
Through thee, my heart hath danced in field and
 fell ;
Through thee, unnumbered draughts at Bethlehem's
 well
Have sins assuaged and banished world's annoy.
Through thee, the hills their purple haze have lent ;
 Voices of bobolinks have been the choir
 Which tuned the grottoes where I found a shrine ;
Hemlock and larch have swung my studious tent ;
 Morning and eve have lit my sacred fire ;
 Paphos, the Muses, and God Pan were mine.

ON CROSSING THE CHARLES AT
ITS MOUTH

O river, over which at morn and night
To daily toil the lightning-harnessed car
Swift hurries me in worn or thoughtful plight,—
Full many a dream thou bring'st of happier star !

All thoughtless were the hours I spent on thee
And rowed or drifted up or down thy tide,
Winging with gulls into the upper free,
Speeding with ships to lands of Eastern pride.
Far back as dear those days of boyhood sweets,
Where growth and health were won for later toil :
No crash of pride or change which fortune meets
Can mar old gains or darling memories spoil.
To-day rude traffic on thy breast may roar,
Still calm I float along an Eden shore.

A SPRAY OF HEMLOCK

You spray of hemlock on my city wall,
I gaze at you remembering whence you came !
That thence I ravaged you, oh, bear no blame,
For winter now enshrouds me in its pall.
I listen, and I hear the squirrels call
Which shot your living green with tawny flame ;
Ay, listen, and I seem to hear the same
Dear murmur of the gurgling brooklet's fall.
I crush your fragrant fibres in my hand,
And senses swim with spicy odors won ;
Above me, wide cerulean depths expand,
Where snowy shallop sail enriched with sun ;
I need no more to dream of Beulah-land,
Thyself art Beulah here and now begun.

GULL AND WAVE

When oft, a boy, I sought the lonely bay
In winter, when the icy surges crashed,
I hailed the waves companions as they dashed,
And leaped from rock to rock as wild as they.
Along the shore I flew, to meet the spray ;
And when with brine the gulls and I were splashed,
I joined their screams, as joyed and unabashed.
The gulls and I were brothers in that day.
O wider zones which years have called to sight,
O thought and toil, O soul's exultant dream,
O friendship of good women and good men —
Together ye have wrought for life's delight :
Yet happy I when comes in sleep the gleam,
The rapture, of the gull and wave again.

EXEMPLAR

How am I worthy that you thus should bring,
Dear friend, to glorify my city room,
Wild-primrose leaves and clustering strawberry-
bloom,
First marvels of cold April's blossoming ?
These crimson maple-buds lift voice and sing ;
And though my sunless casements look on gloom,
And winds to-day from eastward wail and boom,
I sit companioned by resplendent Spring.

“How am I worthy?” Nay, ’t was not my worth
But thy beneficence that roamed the wood
And brought these wonders to revive my heart !
Shall Syrian dreamer’s dream come yet to birth,
And all mankind know earth’s abundant good,
In Nature’s richness sharing part and part ?

ON CAPE ANN

How wondrous were the breakers that rare day ! —
A day in happy memory secure !
Not forty added years provide the lure
To shroud the picture in forgetful gray :
The summer sunrise flooding all the bay,
The gray, ribbed sands which ceaseless shocks
endure ;
While, buoyant in youth’s dauntless vestiture,
Two boys were daring the tumultuous fray.
Shot through with sun, the waves rolled mobile in,
Great walls of gleaming topaz, liquid flame,
Engulfing us in tides of heavenly fire.
With awe we plunged amid the whirling din —
To rise resplendent ! for our forms became
Like Hermes’ when he flashed in gods’ attire.

DEAR MOTHER EARTH

Fair is the prisoned sunlight in a gem,
But dreary doom were city in the sky
Whose walls, foundations, gateways, low and high,
Were "beryl," "jacinth," "chrysolite." To them
Who dwell there, Allah's peace! — but I should stem
The bright grim battlements, and crave to fly
Down to dear Mother Earth again, where I
Am healed if I but touch her garment's hem.
These silver birches drenched with morning dew,
These sumachs clambering from the jeweled grass,
No realm of gold and chrysoprase could give.
An Eden new each day I wander through,
And pines and hemlocks, towering as I pass,
Enwall the Heaven where I could love and live.

TWO WISPS OF STRAW

I have seen straw afield, what time the grain
Of rich September rose in yellow shocks,
And wondered at the wealth which brawn and brain
Had tortured, tireless, from New England's rocks.
And I have viewed rare galleries arrayed
With tapestries of straw from Orient shrines,
By patient artist fingers interlaid
In storied scenes and arabesque designs.

But these two tattered wisps which I beheld
To-day as Winter is just loosening hold,
Gave inward vision rarer joy than welled
At human artifice or harvest gold :
For these were woven to a bluebird's tune,
And spoke of treetop joyance and of June.

NATURE'S FOUNDLINGS

When lush Marsh-Marigolds their bloom unfold
In moisty vales where April brooklets run,
They lift their yellow radiance to the sun
In joyance never dreamed by market gold.
Near them, frail Bloodroot — meek though sanguine
stoled —
Her white plumes blossoming from juices dun —
Playfully trembles at the mocking fun
Of Cranesbill shuddering as if ghostly old.
I laughed with them to-day on sunny banks
O'erhung by hemlocks widely topping all,
And raised my own glad song in quiet thanks
That on this busy, phantom-chasing Ball
One soul at least was free to join the ranks
Of Nature's foundlings beyond city wall.

THE SECRET

How blest am I, who blissfulness can find
In commonest delights that greet my hand !
I cannot flee Earth's richness ; — move or stand,
Her treasure to my coffers is inclined.
The clouds that seem the sky and earth to bind,
The daisies dancing to the breezes' band,
The waves that roll to wedlock with the land, —
My beggar's bowl runs over, glory-lined !
The meadow-sparrow's muse, the sun's caress,
The challenge of the cliffside's beckoning call,
The comradeship of brooks along my path, —
To some, a sighing in the wilderness !
Yet forum, theatre, nor banquet-hall,
Nor gold, nor power, nor praise, such blessing hath.

SPIRIT WITH SPIRIT

The pall has fled which dulled the early east —
The swift white wonder of the dawn is nigh.
Refreshed, transfigured, by the night passed by,
I leap participant to Nature's feast.

Oh, marvelous, that I, who seem the least
Of natural things beneath this roseate sky,
Should thus exalted be — that thus am I
On hilltop chanting, worshiper and priest.

O body of me, which fifty years hath sprung
Up craggy heights and foraged in the dales,
Still youth's elastic fibre thrills in thee!

O soul within, that ages old hath sung
In skyey deeps where spirit Spirit hails,
Thine still is youth — thine, ageless ecstasy.

THE PENDULUM

Nature, in thy glad temple, to and fro,
Ever the pendulum of beauty swings ;
Summer or winter, spring or autumn, brings
Rapture of eye where'er we turn or go.
Dawn-dew, the virtue of the sunrise-glow,
The grasses' strength, the spruces' freshening rings,
Fall's smokeless flame, white wreaths December
flings, —
Largess of beauty gods might joy to know.
Surely, O Nature, thine no mocking bloom !
Vibrates thy pendulum not aimlessly, —
An order meaningless, — a dial-less clock !
Yet where revolve thy hands that point our doom ?
And how through ages is rewound thy key ?
No answer greets us though we knock and knock.



"Come out and visit us!" the Blue Hills call:
From Rattle Rock or Chickatawbut scaled
See leagues of undulating glory spread!"

— Facing page 181

POEMS OF NATURE

III. SONNETS OF THE BLUE HILLS RESERVATION, MASSACHUSETTS

INDIAN SUMMER

Back for a day or two are come the glow
And warmth of August, as October wanes.
The air is languorous glory. The proud stains
Of ripened verdure signal high and low
O'er hill and dale. Soft showers come and go.
Forgetting yesterday's sharp frosts and pains,
Earth laughs at losses, rich with sudden gains
As magic lights and shadows sink and show.
"Come out and visit us!" the Blue Hills call :
"From Rattle Rock or Chickatawbut scaled
See leagues of undulating glory spread !
Hourly my crimson curtains rise and fall ; —
Oh come, nor let my pageant pass unhailed,
No footfall sounding but the fox's tread !"

IN THE BLUE HILLS IN NOVEMBER

I

In the Storm of Sunday, November 13

Where Kitch-a-makin's rocky front upheaves
O'er Sassamon's fair notch in rugged lines,
The clinging fern-growth full as bravely shines
This dreary day as when the Spring unweaves
The first rare fronds that venture. The wind grieves
And sleet whirls wild ; but hazels wave me signs
That tempests daunt them not, and blackberry-vines,
Still green and red, run riot through dead leaves.
In Sassamon, through all the Winter's snows,
Those ferns from their bleak crevices peep out
And hail the hardy wanderer through the hills.
They never fail him. Happy he who knows,
Amid the city's lonely-populous rout,
Where welcome waits which soothes all earthly ills.

II

In the Sunshine of Sunday, November 20

November — fickle monarch — jocund rules :
For what a morning ! — air the air of May,
In Sassamon the chickadees at play,
And zephyrs dancing over ice-clad pools !
Nahanton's frosty forehead steams and cools,
And on his shriveled breast, so lately gay,

Dead stalks of golden-rod and asters sway
In ghostly caps and bells — poor Nature-fools !
Alas ! 't is but an hour or two of sun,
And then the freezing night shall lull again
To dreamless sleep this dull half-wakened bee !
Yet flaunt, O sumach-plumes, till day is done !
Your faith, surviving keenest joy and pain
Which life can blend, is eke the faith of me.

ON HANCOCK HILL

On Hancock Hill are joys all lovers know
Whose loves are birds and flowers, and tinkling
brooks
That run unseen though heard, 'neath rocky
nooks,—
Mysterious streams as those of storied flow.
O ferny dells ! O chestnuts bending low !
I hail you and return the tender looks
You give admirers, while your leafy hooks
Reach out to hinder them what time they go.
For me, I go not hastily,— too sweet
The prospect distant and the riches near ;
And oft I witness, as I pass a-thrill,
The violet and the cranesbill touch and greet,
Each whispering, “ No harm from him we fear ;
He loves us all too well, on Hancock Hill.”

IN WILDCAT NOTCH

No more the wildcat snarls in these stern aisles ;
Gray frisking squirrels in his haunts have home,
And hither, thither, bright-hued insects roam,
Gay gleams of color 'gainst dim rocky piles.
No wolf-now lurks with predatory wiles ;
But from their coverts in the forest dome
Veery and ovenbird flash amid the gloam,
Their clarions ringing through these rude defiles.
For me, here throned on mossy granite ledge,
'Neath pines serene that utter Orient balm,
Earth's brute contentions fade and are forgot.
Anew to simpleness my soul I pledge.
Nirvana — conscious unison with Calm —
Expands within me. Strife henceforth is not.

IN WONDER EVERY HOUR

[At "The Crags"]

I gaze anew in wonder every hour
At all the strange sweet beauty of the world —
The marvel of the nearest budding flower ;
Dark cloud-rack flying ; waves in frolic curled.
Yon harbor's edge a realm of mystery glows —
Each circling beach a lure of sands and shells.

The secret of these hills my spirit knows
And drinks refreshed at Meditation's wells.
Last night the darkness caught me on The Crags
High hung above the alder-shaded spring ;
October maples waved their radiant flags
And showed my feet each crevice where to cling.
Earth's grief and toil ! how futile is your fuming
When thus for me each hour some rose springs
blooming.

WINTER GLORY

A few gay snow-birds with their brave "Cheep,
cheep!"
Allured my feet this morning to the hills.
The earth is snow-clad, but melodious rills
'Neath icy crust refuse to lie asleep.
No step till mine has crunched the vale or steep
Since came the snow ; but trails the partridge drills
Are plain to wondering sight, and vision thrills
At tracks where foxes lurk and rabbits leap.
Up gleaming Chickatawbut's slippery cone
I climb to view far Cheshire's flower of white.¹
Below me calls the hardy chickadee ;
The keen breeze through the pines has bravest tone ;
With sun the frost-fringed oak-leaves are alight.
One are brook, bird, and leaf, and heart of me.

¹ The peak of Monadnock, sixty-eight miles distant.

ON BOARD SHIP IN SASSAMON NOTCH

To-day the pines on Kitch-a-makin roar.
Far up, their snowy topsails thrash and sway
Like reeling ships in Ocean's Titan play,
While through this granite notch such currents pour
Of biting blasts unleashed from Winter's store,
That I can hear and feel the hurtling spray
Of tempests thundering in Baffin's Bay,
Where I am shipwrecked on that Arctic shore!
You sailors on the February main,
To-day your jovial sea-songs are you chanting,
As in the tales which fireside readers please?
Or are you clinging — ice-clad, numb with pain,
In desolate despair and horror panting —
To frozen shrouds in pitiless swashing seas!

GAIN STILL THE GOAL

[On Doe Hollow Path]

On wide-spread wing, O hawk, thou sailest high,
While I, good lack! toil plodding through the snow!
If I, like thee, might too on pinions go
Should I be happier in that trackless sky?
On wings should I be free from cause to sigh?
Would strifes be absent, life no bafflings know?

No grief thou hast in any winds that blow !
Should I be thou — or should I still be I ?
Silent, thou wingest from my ken. No less,
O denizen of untried altitudes,
In my brief sight of thee is food for thought.
I will content me with what power to bless
These snowdrifts offer, and by patient roods
Gain still the goal thy flight had swifter brought !

VINE AND BIRCHES

A Fable of Pine-Tree Brook

To-day the vine and birches held commune.
(I know their language, for I listen much —
And love their speech, their sanity is such.
They sometimes even bid me join their rune !)
To-day love's friendliness was all their tune,
Indignant that December's boisterous touch
Had striven remorselessly the grapevine's clutch
To rive from branches where it dreamed of June :
“ Hold brave, O Vine, against our breasts of snow —
The springtime sun arrives again apace !
While speeds the earth, opposing winds shall blow ;
Resolve ! — thy battling brings unlooked-for grace !
The bliss of summer eves thou yet shalt know,
October's purple clusters crown thy face ! ”

“THE SHANTY”

[It is said that the opening sentence of “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” appropriated here, refers to the cramped cell in Bedford Gaol where Part I. of the famous allegory was written. . . . “The Shanty” is a little, old house on an abandoned farm on the edge of the Blue Hills Reservation, hired by a group of a dozen or fifteen Nature-lovers who know the secret of its entrance,—wood being always stored at hand for the roaring fireplaces in winter, and a spring bubbling near for the thirsty in summer.]

“As through the wilderness” of that dear world
Where Care eludes and Rest and Worship meet,
“I walked” to-day with ever freshening feet,
“I lighted,” while the beating snowstorm whirled,
“Upon a certain place,” in calmness furled,
“Where was a Den.” Not Bunyan’s shamed re-
treat,
Which genius glorified with visions sweet,
But just “The Shanty,” by the roadside curled.
Within the dooryard, skis and snowshoes propped
Gave sign afar that Brothers of the Free
Had come an hour to read or feast or play.
What wonder that expectantly I stopped,—
For howling winds, red logs, full minds, and glee
Still widen walls as in rare Bunyan’s day!

THE SILVER BIRCH

[Near Indian Camp Pool]

I asked the silver birch how came its bark
So passing fair, so wondrous to the sight.
“Behold !” I said, “your cheeks how smooth and
white,
While all your woodsy kin are bossed and dark !
At eve, as I went singing through the park,
Though Venus and Arcturus veiled their light,
Your beckoning moonshafts, gleaming through the
night,
Drew eyes’ swift archery, a shining mark !”
Then spake the tree : “We, too, were dull when earth
First knew us ; but when winter’s shroud of snow
Enwrapped us, and our brothers wailed, we laughed !
A god quick cried, ‘O birches, Man needs mirth :
For all time in this snowy splendor glow !
Who solves your secret, life’s best wine has
quaffed !’”

THE PINE-TREE

[At Wissahissick Pond]

O pine-tree, thou art Circe of the wood !
My path thou hast entangled and betrayed !
I saw thee, and thy smile betokened aid,—
Thy balm seemed greater than all earthly good.
Alas ! once lured beneath thy fragrant hood,
Thy ruthless needles through my bosom played.
Thy base enchantment now is open laid,
But I am chained beyond all will and should.
I pray thee, pine-tree, loose thy fragrant trap !
At home my loved-ones for my coming stay,
Unwitting of thy necromantic art. . . .
Ah ! limbs at last have power thy charm to snap !
But as my body drags itself away,
Thou, sorceress still, dost snatch and keep my
heart !

TO A HEMLOCK ON CHICKA-TAWBUT

Again I flee the city's arid stress
To greet thee, forest brother dear and tried !
Recumbent in the heaven thy arms provide
I thrill with ecstasy at thy caress.

Against thy sun-warm sides my cheek I press,
And know thee still my kin, as when in pride
Our far-off ancestors towered side by side.—
Thou still art tree ! I human more or less.

When I have solved the secret of this flesh,
My flame-freed ashes I in love decree
Where some near sapling's roots may pierce my
clay.

I then shall flourish by thy side afresh,
Once more upon the earth a glorious tree,
While raptured others in my shade shall stray !

DECEMBER HILLTOPS

The snow up-piled holds all the hills in calm.
Their heights and hollows greet untracked the eye
Of such rare voyagers as speed the sky
Belated from the pinelands to the palm.
And yet, O hills, to-day I sang your psalm
Perched high on Hancock's summit, though my cry
Made music for no eager passer-by
Who craved as I your healing piny balm.
No less speak well the bards and seers who say
That to himself the singer's song returns,
Though other ear may hear not or may scorn ;
For, toiling up your heights, the drift-filled way
And lofty view became as fire that burns —
My song a chant at Heaven's high gate at morn.

POEMS OF THE IMMORTAL HOPE

I. MISCELLANEOUS

THE TRANSCENDENT POSSIBILITY

Amid a treeless prairie vast
A horseman stayed at set of sun :
With eyes far strained o'er shadows dun
He swept the waste his steed had passed,

And onward, o'er the path to be,
And there and here, on every side.
But naught in Nature's round replied ;
His gaze met blank obscurity.

Yet, lo ! the man was Nature's child !
He trusted Her who gave him birth :
He laid him on the flower-spread earth,
Amid the grawsome vastness wild.

He knew not he should wake again :
To wake or sleep he knew was good.

In love with air and sea and wood
His eyes he shut with sweet Amen.

His arm for pillow — this was all ;
Uncovered lay he on earth's breast :
But rested he with gracious rest,
And o'er him gleamed the star-set wall.

THE KISS OF DEATH

My little child lay moaning as she slept.
What dream of evil through her slumbers crept
I knew not — but her forehead I caressed,
And to her trembling lips my own I pressed.
Smiling, she woke. Her grief had taken wing.
The kiss had power to make her sorrow sing.

Is here a parable ? Is life a dream ?
Doth all our anguish not exist, but seem ?
Daily — not sleeping, but awake — we moan !
Yes ! but the guest-room — it is Nature's own ;
And may it be that she, when ends our breath,
Wakes us to Peace with that sweet kiss of Death ?

THE LOVED AND GONE

Glad thought we give, proved true by tears,
To those, the loved and gone,
Who at our side in other years
Inspired and helped us on.
Their presence lingers with us still,
As stars amid the night,
The while they roam the dreamland hill
Beyond our earthly sight.

Oh, more than these who greet our eyes
Are ye with silent feet !
And gratefully we recognize
Your benediction sweet.
We may not whisper loud each name, —
Too sacred is our thought ;
But humbly take, of praise or blame,
The good ye to us brought.

Be near us still to aid and bless,
Ye friends of other days !
Soul yet doth feel your fond caress,
Your olden likeness raise.
Thus heart doth still respond to heart,
And ye, though gone from sight,
Are never dead, but still are part
Of all our love and light.

WHO KNOWS?

What sailor knows, beneath the wave he lies on,
The secrets of the sea ?

Who fathoms Time beyond the dim horizon
Which bounds Eternity ?

Who knows the endless deeps of skyey spaces ?
The course the comets run ?

Who knows what light illuminates men's faces
Beyond the moon and sun ?

As children dream, so men have gazed in vision
And seen a city blest.

If such there be, what insight, grace, decision
May glorify its rest !

We wonder daily what they may be doing
In that fair realm afar :

Nor deem we that their steps are but pursuing
The space from star to star.

Love, labor, progress ! — this the constant story
Ascending Nature speaks ;

Love, labor, progress ! — this were highest glory
Of beatific weeks.

“There will be Light !” The Voice is Voice
Eternal,

And still the Light will be.

New stars, new suns, new satellites supernal
Blaze forth continually.

Whose hands, it may be, clothe the high Sierras
Of those new worlds with white ?

Whose kindly fingers dissipate the terrors
Of their Antarctic night ?

Invention fails ; imagination falters ;
We may not read the sky :

But this we know : If there are heavenly altars,
Affection stands thereby !

If thought and will go on to larger being,
And do not stop with death,

Then, surely, weak is all our earthly seeing,
To that diviner breath.

We still may hope — still magnify our dreaming —
Nor fear the Future blank ;

If Nature’s law is steadfast, and not seeming,
Life rises rank on rank.

And if those souls still are, who bore our sorrows,
Their fondness still must glow,

The same devotion fill their fine to-morrows
That cherished us below.

They love us still ! the beautiful and tender,
Who early, one by one,
Have fled earth's darkness for supernal splendor,
Earth's shadows for the sun !

O Angel-Sisters ! have us in your keeping !
We cannot dream you dead !
We feel our hearts might hear, were they not
sleeping,
Your pinions overhead !

O Angel-Mothers ! beautiful as Morning,
And brighter than the Day !
Our earthly doubts with heavenly grace adorning,
Ye steal our hearts away !

THE PASSING

*How came these words I may not note.
I walked beneath the tranquil stars ;
A Voice, as from their golden bars,
Said "Write !" to me : I therefore wrote.
Ev'n yet I feel the tremulous thrill !
I tread again the pine-clad hill.*

A mystery ? — true ; yet I fear not to go.
Nothing harsh can be. Indeed, when I know

We walk not alone ; that within us and out
Throbs ever the Might that engirds us about ;

That the Power which developed us reigns through all,
A limitless Sea — not a vertical Wall ;

When I learn how the forces of death and life
Intercircle forever, yet never at strife ;

When I know that the order and beauty around
With the life of the All-Life ever abound ;

That every bird on every tree
Is thrilled a-through with God's own glee ;

That every gleam from human eye
Is a gleam of the All-Soul's Mystery,—

Fain would I leave this house of clay,
To travel with God on his endless way;

To whirl with the atom and dance with the light,
Or glow in a star to illumine earth's night.

Things fail not. Though earth-life has passage like
dreams
The Order Eternal still pulses and streams.

We know not "soul" passes! We only can know
That pass if it must, 't is to else it will go.

It cannot be lost: it is bound up with All;
And, while anything lasts, shall the Soul of Things
fall?

Come, Death! You for him lack all terrors and
pains
Who deems, though he vanish, he deathless yet
reigns.

GONE

From my sleep I start, and gaze without.
What is this load — this load of doubt —
This weight that presses so hard and deep
Upon my heart that I cannot sleep ?
That presses so hard — with such a heat —
That my burning heart will scarcely beat ?
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on !
She whom I loved is gone, is gone !

I gaze from my window — I gaze on high :
Coldly the moon slants down the sky —
Cold as the cold and icy weight
That lies in the Valley Desolate —
That lies in the valley of death and gloom
Where earth for its beautiful bride made room.
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on !
She whom I loved is gone, is gone.

Faint on my bed falls the light of stars :
Red at the door of his tent stands Mars —
Red as the lurid light that throws
Vesuvius' shade on Italian snows.
Faintly it falls on her lowly mound,
And reddens the landscape all around.
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on !
She whom I loved is gone, is gone !

Oh, what to my heart remains of good! . . .
I know that when last by her side I stood,
She pointed her finger — she pointed high :
“I die,” she whispered, “yet shall not die!”
That finger uplifted I still can see ;
And it beckons, eternally beckons to me.
She whom I loved — ah no ! not gone !
The star that once beckoned still beckons
me on !

POEMS OF THE IMMORTAL HOPE

II. SONNETS

AT THE TURN OF THE ROAD

When comes at last my destined hour to die ;
When here entranced I may no longer stay
To mingle in the wonders of the day —
To wander hill and sea and watch the sky —
I know my dust will most serenely lie :
For confidence is mine in Nature's way ;
I know her summons never can betray ;
Her magic touch holds naught to terrify.
If it were good to come, to learn of life,
No less it must be good to go, to learn
What strength and mystery reside in death.
I here have known the full of joy and strife,
And smiled throughout ; and at the highway's turn
No whit less royally I yield my breath.

BY THE DARK-BRIGHT RIVER

This is the dark-bright river, at whose side
I stand in wonder while its waters moan,
Seeming to hear a music all my own
In the calm rote with which its currents glide.
I stoop and dip my hand within its tide,
Perchance to still the human doubt and groan
Which round me rise from those who dread its tone,
And prove it friend, not enemy, when tried.
These sounds familiar which I seem to hear —
These harmonies of constant birth and death —
Are but the World-Soul's alternating play.
As harmless as the sunset is this sheer
Slow welling of the waters, and the breath
Already circles of a breaking day.

EASTWARD WINDOWS

No more I see them at the accustomed pane, —
Two glowing faces, fair and full of glee,
That always smiled and signaled friendlily
As I went daily down the morning lane.
Each night when I returned, I looked in vain ;
The sash was dark, nor could I ever see
Or boy or girl to wave or welcome me :
Yet with the morrow they were there again !

The morning now is but another night :
But all the lane now rings with songs not sad,
Down flung from skies with this new bliss increased ;
And oft I think, since they have taken flight,
Of two bright morning faces making glad
Some casement fronting the Eternal East.

KNOWN OF OLD

Where walks he — my companion¹ known of old,
Star-bright, with whom I wandered arm in arm ?
Each shielded each from the approach of harm,
Each counseled each with loving wisdom bold.
He vanished, and the summer path grew cold.
For him nor me had life or death alarm ;
No less, on hill and by the river farm
I walk alone, while he the Way of Gold.
Where now he treads, what sunrise-glories burn ? —
I dream in vain his pathway through the blue,
Yet feel 't is on and on, through endless mile.
And doth he wait for me at some fair turn,
With eager eye expecting me in view ?
Be mine to make the meeting worth the while !

¹ Edward Foster Temple (1854-1899); Tufts, '81.

THE VANISHED

The moon's bright sickle shines above the larch,
A golden arc on shield of silvery blue.
Eastward the dawn's white splendor, bursting
through,
Strives swiftly yonder westering stars to parch.
But ah ! for us alone Day's lustrous arch,
Around them quivering, outshines their hue :
Glad eyes far distant, hailing Night anew,
See them just mounting for their heavenly march !
O radiant loves and powers, and all fine graces
Which daily, human shaped, around us sink,
Far fleeing from our strained and questioning gaze !
Somewhere, it may be, gleam your shining faces
Climbing to sight above Oblivion's brink,
Somewhere anew your healing splendors blaze.

ADDITIONAL POEMS

I. THE BELLS OF COMO

THE BELLS OF COMO

[Read to the Zetagathean Society¹ of Tufts College Theological School, at its seventh public literary anniversary, May 26, 1881]

In Italy beyond the sea —
Dim, mediæval Italy —
When she whose ancient power and pride
Had been for centuries thrown aside
Was slowly waking from her sleep,
And with the inspiration deep
And ardor of a second birth,
Among the nations of the earth
Was striving for a nobler place ; —
When all the Cæsar-line was dust,
And nothing but decay and rust
Remained of the Imperial race ;
And a new line of kings had come,
Immortal throughout Christendom, —
Dante and Michaelangelo
And Petrarch and Boccaccio ; —
When she, so long the nations' scoff,

¹ *Zetagathean Society* — The Society Seeking Good.

Had risen and flung her languor off,
And, waking, had disclosed her skill
In marble, and her power to thrill
And captivate with harmony
A waiting, rapt humanity ;—
In Italy beyond the sea,
Dim, early modern Italy,
Was born one day a little child, —
A little weakling ! as if he,
For whom was meant a destiny
Amazing, luring, mocking, wild,
Blissful at times, at times severe, —
Humble, exalted, mild, austere, —
Had been by Nature sent to be
Even in birth an epitome
Of all the dread, magnificent,
Vain-glorious accomplishment
Of his own native monarchy.

He was a marvel of a child,
His mother thought — the neighbors knew ;
For often, as he lay, he smiled ;
And closing his clear eyes of blue,
Would bend his ear as if he caught
Some echo of angelic thought,
The murmur of rhythmic melody,
A strain of heavenly harmony.

When out of babyhood he passed,
And grew in stature, and at last

Had come to boyhood, all his art,
Untried, imperfect, yet in part
Revealing what was in his heart,
Was raptly exercised to bring
From brass, from iron, from everything
That answered with melodious ring
When he should touch it, such a tone
As always, when he was alone,
Seemed ringing in the air around —
The song still present, and the sound,
Which once, when he a baby lay,
The angels sang to him each day.
And as he labored still, apart,
And leaned to listen, — and on wings
Of eager wishes would ascend
Where yonder anthems seemed to blend,
Echoing without hush or end, —
His mother wondered at these things
And pondered them within her heart.
“What is it, Michael?” she one day
Entreated. “Tell me your desire!
Your eyes are radiant with a fire
Like that on Como when the sun
Is setting and the day is done.
What is it! Tell it me, I pray!”
But Michael only turned away.
He had no words, no heart, to say,
Unto his mother even, as yet,
The longing that was in his soul,
The wish not yet in his control.

But as he turned, his eyes were wet !
For even then there seemed to rise
The ever-swelling harmony,
The far-off angel melody,
Filling the blue, ethereal skies
With sweetest notes, as if to wound
His spirit with ideal sound.

Swiftly the months and seasons ran,—
The youth still musing,— till one day,
With something of a wild dismay,
He woke and found himself a man.
His thought, his toil, his frequent prayer
Had brought no laurel to his side ;
His soul was still unsatisfied,
His chimes were still but in the air.

His chimes ! For it was Michael's aim,
In manhood as in youth the same,—
His one endeavor,— to create
So marvelous a chime of bells,
So fair and void of parallels,
That they the soul would captivate,
And a delighted world would own
The music of their silver tone.

“ Some brotherhood of friars,” said he,
“ Some convent here in Italy,
Will gladly purchase them of me.
Through all the world their fame will flow,

And pilgrims here will come and go,
And honor will be mine, and I
Will build me here a cottage fair,
And on the morn and evening air,
Ascending thither, fleeing there,
Will hear their music till I die."

No jangling chimes like those that rung
Throughout the vale where Como lay
When knelt the brotherhood to pray,
Would Michael make! but on the day
When first his silvery bells were swung,
The monks and friars should all confess
Not sins alone and idleness,
But that their prayers before had known
No inspiration like the tone
That echoed from the belfry-throne
Where Michael's chimes rang ecstasy.
Surpassed their music should not be
By any flute of Arcady,
Or any Hebrew timbrel old,
Or any fabled harp of gold,
Or any violin whose fame
Had given to its maker's name
A lustre more than marvelous —
A halo such as still adheres
To him who wrote upon his work
A name which through the deathless years
In Music's memory will lurk —
Antonio Stradivarius.

For years, in secret, Michael strove,
Untiring, in a little grove,
Casting and tuning still, anew,
The metal cups from which he drew
His hope of honor, wealth, and fame.
Alike to him were praise and blame,
Coming from those who nothing knew
Of his high vision or his aim.
Baffled a myriad times, again
Untiringly he toiled, and when
With fleeing years his faith grew dim,
Again the angels came to him.

And so he strove — nor strove in vain :
For in the end his patient pain
Accomplished all his heart's desire.
He labored with his soul on fire ;
And catching from the angels' song
The melody he missed so long,
He tuned in ecstasy sublime
The clang ing bells to perfect chime,
Until they rang a silver tone,
The echo of the angels' own.

A week now hardly passed away
When on the artist, pleased and proud,
There called, with offer rich and rare,
A neighboring friar of orders gray ;
Who, having blest himself, and bowed,
And laid his hand on Michael's hair,

"I come, my brother,"— so he spake,—
"For this your masterpiece to make
With earnest prayer the prior's request.
We offer you a price, and take
With eager thankfulness confessed,
And many a benediction rich,
The wondrous metal marvels which,
By holy Mother Mary blest,
Aided by tireless prayer and thought,
The cunning of your hands has wrought."

This the beginning was. The rest,
Just as he long had dreamed it all,
Now came to Michael with such speed
That in a month his cottage wall
Was rising on the margin wide
Of beautiful blue Como's side ;
And he from toil and want was freed.

At morning now, at noon and night,
In rapture at his cottage door,
Sheltered from summer heat and light
By clustering vine and sycamore,
Entranced did Michael daily sit,
Waiting to hear the joyful peal,
The anthem glad and glorious,
Which from the convent on the height
That rose his homestead opposite
Announced the inmates' hour to kneel —
Betrayed, with sudden and loud appeal,

Of pious intent their overplus,
Or sounded the holy Angelus.

Diviner melodies than these
No chimes in all the world could ring.
To all who hearkened, heavenly ease,
The ecstasies that angels know
Where founts of living waters flow,
Their notes seraphic seemed to bring.
To Michael's thought the blest retreat
Of Eden had no music higher.
Not fabled Orpheus' golden lyre
Had ever sounded half so sweet.
And if at favored Michael's feet
Nor rock nor forest bowed and sang,
His soul was often glorified
With a triumphant, joyful pride
Which Orpheus never knew or dreamed :
For when at morn or eventide
His chimes their silver music rang,
To him, ah ! then to him it seemed
The waiting angels circled low,
And caught and raised the echo high,
And flung it over hill and glen ;
And when the anthem ceased to flow,
Upbore it with them to the sky
And closed it with a sweet Amen.

But now throughout the peaceful vale,
Along the placid lakelet's marge,

The storm of war, its iron hail,
The beat of angry foreign flail,
The din of clashing spear and targe,
Came suddenly and awfully.

As when from out a summer sky,
Where flakes of fairest amber hue
Against a ground of gold and blue
All day have floated gorgeously,
There leaps a sudden awful flash,
The lightning's angry augury ;
And with a quick, tumultuous crash
The thunder follows, and the pale
Blue zenith thickens with the charge
Of cloudy cohorts ; and the large
And sturdy oak — which hitherto,
Whatever stormy tempest blew,
Had towered unsmitten — when the hail
And whirlwind and the furious blow
Have ceased, lies shattered, rootless, low,
All lifeless ; — so throughout the vale
Of Como, and through all the land,
There came the storm of war ; and so,
When turmoil met its overthrow,
And the red, desolating brand
Had fallen from the invading hand,
And Michael again reached his home
From fighting in the ranks of Rome,
No stone above another lay
Where he in love, in happier day,

Had reared his modest tower and dome.
The grove where he for years had toiled
The torch had ruthlessly despoiled,
And more calamitous than all,
Gone was the monkish brotherhood !
And erst where cell and cloister stood,
And prayer re-echoed wall to wall,
Now wrapped in winding-sheet and pall
The convent in a ruined heap
Of ashes lay upon the steep.
And Michael's bells ! his masterpiece !
His peerless, his unrivaled bells,
Whose chimes were never more to cease !
The mocking mob of infidels
Had stolen them away, and left
Their maker mournful and bereft.
The light was taken from his eyes ;
The gate was shut on Paradise.

“Alas !” he murmured. “Woe is me !
My cup for all futurity
Is filled with misery to the brim !”
What now indeed remained for him !
His home, his family, his health
For labor, and his little wealth,
These all were gone ! And even the sound
That once had echoed in the air,
Luring him upward from the ground
With melody beyond compare —

Sounding from heavenly citadels :
This too had vanished with his bells.

Or so it seemed to him at first ;
For afterwards, as he one day
Was kneeling on the ground to pray—
The ruined ground where he of yore
Had sat beside his cottage door,—
Upon his ear a sudden burst
Of the old melody on high
Rang rapturously ; and from the sky
A voice angelic, clear and loud,
Came searchingly. “ Why here delay ?
Up, Michael ! up ! ” it seemed to say.
“ Why linger thus, with forehead bowed
And footsteps idle ? Follow on !
Somewhere your bells their joyful tone
Are ringing even now ! Be gone !
Seek them afar, and claim your own ! ”

So Michael rose, nor stayed an hour.
New hope was in his heart ; and power
To journey, did the need require,
From the blue skies and silver seas
Of his own Temperate Italy,
To where the Tropic’s flaming sky
Unrolled its canopy of fire,
Or where the desolate Arctic breeze
Blew cold above the mountains drear
Of the waste northern hemisphere.

So seized he in that selfsame day
His cloak and staff and shallow purse,
Intent in many a city way,
And many a hamlet, to rehearse
The history of his stolen bells,
The fair and void of parallels !

Steadfast he wandered here and there,
Seeking his darlings everywhere.
And not alone in Italy,
Beneath his native skies of blue,
But where the Jura mountains threw
Their shadow on Geneva's sea.
Not up and down the Alps alone,
And through and through the Apennine,
But where the Danube and the Rhine
Upreared their convent-towers of stone.
Who knew but here, perchance, his bells
Rang out in grief their stolen tone !
“Who knows,” he cried, “but here there dwells
A respite for my grief and pain,
And here my ears, so weary grown,
Shall ring with harmony again !”
But when he heard the clang and roar
That echoed up and down the slopes,
Sounding from many a convent-shrine,
Vanished again were all his hopes.
“Alack !” he sighed, “they are not mine !”
His bells revealed their secret lore
In heavenly harmony ! — but these,

What ear could deem their notes divine,
Or call their anthems melodies !

The seasons went and came ; and went
And came again : and still his way
Across and through the continent,
Untiringly, from day to day,
Michael pursued, through cold and heat.
Through ten, through twenty years, his feet
Onward unceasingly were bent.
Far to the East his steps were turned —
To where on priest-fed altars burned
Unfading fire ; and to the shrine
Of Bethlehem in Palestine.
Even through India and Cathay
His search unfaltering he made.
No distance could his zeal evade.
His chimes seemed never far away :
On mountain, o'er the desert sand,
On lake, on river, on the land,
Ever they sounded loud and clear,
Ringing triumphant in his ear.
His form was bent, his beard was gray,
His wrinkled face was bronzed and burned ;
But as a traveler in the night,
Groping, and waiting for the light,
Yet walking still, so Michael turned,
And waited for the coming day.

It was in Greece at last that news
Was given the wanderer of his bells ;

Amid the towers and citadels
Of Athens, where, to pray and muse,
And stray an hour, and lean upon
The ruins of the Parthenon,
Had come at length his weary feet.
A traveler here he met, replete
With stories wonderful, who said :
“ Somewhere in yonder Western seas
I heard their marvelous melodies ! ”
But where, he could not say ; for dead
Now in his memory the ground
Where he had listened to their sound.

But Michael had at least a clue ;
And hurrying to Italy
His way he purposed to pursue
Along the borders of the sea
Through all the countries of the West,
And there, God willing, end his quest.

In a few days his feet had come
To buried Herculaneum ;
And when he saw the mountain's brim
Piercing the cloudrack over him —
Gazing as with defiant air
Upon the buried cities there —
On Michael's burning heart the tears
Fell thick and fast for wasted years ;
As on Vesuvius' burning height
The rain fell hissing in the night.

Then north, to the unblest estate
Where ancient Rome sat desolate—
Discrowned, like Lear, by daughters she
Had pampered in prosperity.
And there, in Rome, at last ! he heard
The story he so long had sought.
He met a mariner, who brought
The happy, long-expected word,
That yonder, on the sun-lit shore
Of Erin there were silver bells,
So fair and void of parallels
That he who heard would fain implore
That he might hear them evermore.

A month went by. A little bark
Was moored on Shannon's placid tide.
A boat was pushing from her side ;
And o'er the silver wave the dark
Fantastic turret of Saint Mary's lay,
Far shadowed by the dropping day.

Kneeling within the little boat,
His streaming eyes upon the tower,
Was Michael. Happy, happy hour !
“O bells !” he cried, “one marvelous note !
Long have I sought your sacred glee !
Ring out ! ring out, and welcome me !
Ring, at the setting of the sun :
Ring ! and my pilgrimage is done !”

The answer came. A silvery shower
Burst from the old cathedral tower.
A smile illumed the wanderer's face :
His heart sang inward jubilee.
The bells were his ! and time nor place
Had marred or dulled their melody.

'But Michael ! — when the rowers sought
To take in theirs his withered hand,
And rouse him, as they neared the land,
They did his guardian angels wrong.
His soul the seraph-hosts had caught,
And borne it upward with the song.
The melody was Michael's knell :
The anthem was his passing-bell.

My comrades ! at whose prized command
I come again a little while
To greet you, and to take your hand,
And meet your well remembered smile,
And read to you, in simple phrase,
In memory of other days,
This verse of mine ! — your kindly word
Of welcoming I gladly heard ;
And pondering what land, what date,
What freak of Fortune or of Fate,

What winter gloom or summer light
I best might open to your sight,
I chose this Legend Beautiful,
Of patience under painful rule,
Of high response to inward gleam,
Of consecration to a dream,
Of eager wandering to find
A Paradise for heart and mind !

To you the legend I relate,
To you the tale I dedicate.

You are the Seekers after Good !¹
You stand where Greathearts oft have stood !
Your lives you dedicate in youth
To painful — joyful — endless search,
And in the portals of the Church
Seek Knowledge and Eternal Truth !
To-day, of Truth perchance the prize
You think you hold before your eyes.
Through care, and toil, and anxious thought,
The melody you long have sought
Seems ringing in the sun-lit air ;
And you are confident, forsooth,
And "Thus and so," you say, "is Truth !"

What shall I say to you ? — Beware ?
Clasp not with fervor to your soul

¹ See *note*, page 207.

A dream so flattering, so unreal ?
I would not mock your glad appeal !
Far rather would my hand unroll,
If such were possible, a scroll
On which were written, " Yea ! your search
Has led you to the one true Church !
Your dream — it is indeed The Truth,
And you are conquerors ev'n in youth ! "

Alas ! we know not where it lies.
It is not ours with seraph's eyes
To pierce to hidden destinies !
We seek, we knock, we vainly call,
Like Pilate in the council-hall ;
And still the Christ no answer makes —
And still the rabble comes and takes
And carries him without the wall.

As " Truth " we rear to-day our schemes ;
To-morrow shows us they are dreams.
The world's advancing Wisdom creeps
On strongholds where Tradition sleeps ;
And walls where Worship thought to rest
Are rent in twain in Reason's quest.
The chimes religious awe has reared,
To alien isles have disappeared ;
And every solace of the heart
At times seems summoned to depart.

What then ! Shall we forbear our toil ?
Blow out our lamp ? neglect the oil ?
Repose on some Calypso beach,
Or to the hall of Circe flee ?

Good lies not far beyond our reach !
We daily hear its melody ;
It echoes round us, as we go
Our wondrous pilgrimage ; and though
Philosophy's high soarings fail,
And Reason's humbler gropings pale,
Our souls are born anew each day,
Still dreaming that beyond the gray
And distant bound of changing skies,
Our journey's object waiting lies !
We feel a meaning in the hope
That lures us up the spirit's slope !
Somewhere our chimes are ringing still,
Responsive to our search and will !
Before us rise the Hills of Day
And call us to pursue our way ;
Love's loftier ranges, Wisdom's seas,
Forbid our souls to lie at ease.
We know that Love is Heaven's breath ;
That Hate and Wilfulness are death ;
That Aspiration for the Right
Rewards the eager soul with light.
So still we follow on To Know !
And though indeed no Final Word

Is ever by the spirit heard,
Enough is ours of Being's glow
To tinge the clouds of life below
With a serene, resplendent ray
Betokening a Higher Day.
A glimmer of the truth we seek
Life's growing revelations speak,
And music sweet as Michael's bells
Man's coming blessedness foretells.
Happy if even as we die
We hear, like him, its harmony !

ADDITIONAL POEMS

II. HEART OF YOUTH

HEART OF YOUTH

[1881]

I

A noontide sun, in early summer-time ;
Low, billowy summits, in their verdant prime,
Bounding a valley wide and fair and still :
And in the midst, the slopes of Walnut Hill.¹

On all the northern hand, — far-reaching, gray, —
The heights of Winchester, in rude array ;
And trending east, where lakes like sapphires burn,
The Fells of Middlesex, embowered in fern.

Still east, the sea ! a silvery line and thin,
Hedged by the rocky heights of distant Lynn ;
And circling nearer — placid as the dead —
Along whose banks once Paul Revere sped —
The Mystic's narrow tide, expanding soon
Into a crystal mere, a broad lagoon,
Reflecting far, from morn till evening hour,
Gray Bunker's lofty, sun-illumined tower.

¹ The former name of College Hill (Tufts College).

Southward, the city — dreary desert vast! . . .
Haste thee, my verse! beware the woe! fly fast!
Far, far beyond, see Milton's purple hills,
The blue-domed range which every bosom thrills;
And nearer — where the marbles hide from view
The ashes of a Sumner and Ballou —
Fair Auburn, circled by a hundred farms,
And clasped in sluggish Charles's sinuous arms.

Westward, the fertile fields of Alewife Brook,
Laughing with harvests ripening for the hook —
Flecked by the shadows of vast clouds that float
Aimless as shipwrecked sails on seas remote —
Edged by low mountains shimmering in the sun,
The emerald Heights, far-famed, of Arlington;
Enchanted hills, which, when the day is past,
Are tipt with glory such as Nebo cast
When angels hastened o'er its darkening crest
Bearing the Hebrew prophet to his rest!

II

Northward and eastward from this favored scene,
This Walnut Hill, this college-crowned demesne, —
Beyond the river flowing at its feet,
Beyond the stir of village pier and street,
There winds a road through rarest sylvan ways,
The ever new delight of summer days.

Here darkling thickets, densely green, abide,
Hazel, and oak, and birch, on either side, —
Where the brown partridge unseen whirrs, and where
Gray squirrels lurk, and rabbits have their lair.

Here blooms the barberry, in yellow sprays,
Miles long ! and here, through all the summer days,
The sweet wild rose and fragrant wilding phlox
Vie with the garden pinks and hollyhocks
Which shall be crowned the fairer ! And the prize
No single wanderer, passing with pleased eyes,
Withholds from Nature's wilding ones, here strowed
Luxuriantly.

. . . Along this sunny road
Two friends were walking at the noon of day ;
And both were thoughtful, though they both were gay.
They both were thoughtful ; but the summer air,
The sunshine through the branches here and there,
The laughing bobolink, the cawing crow,
The blue above, the emerald below,
Made life that hour so beautiful a dream
That rustling leaf nor onward murmuring stream
Could less of sorrow feel, or wild despair,
Than these companions idly wandering there.

For both were young ! and in the soul of each
Were aspirations deeper than all speech :
Ambitions for the honor which the world
Stands ready to inscribe on flags unfurled
In noble causes ; — aspirations, too,
That honor granted should be honor due.

They dreamed of sacred fire withheld by Gods :
They knew of Caucasus, and of the odds
Prometheus wrestled with, and all his pain ;
And yet they dared it all, and more, again ;

And with the vultures' whirr still sounding nigh
 They dared to rest their ladder on the sky.

Upon the shore of Time they would not sit.
 The Ocean was before ! and they were knit
 Unto a firm resolve, by faith upheld
 To walk the waters ! If they boiled and welled,
 The way would be more difficult ; if calm,
 The port were sooner reached — the Isles of Palm.
 Nor did they hesitate to point their feet
 To where life's ocean and horizon meet.

They knew — yet were not daunted — wild with spray
 The vengeful tempest would assail their way.
 They knew men's bones lay bleaching on the sand ;
 They saw the carcasses tossed high on land
 Of earnest voyagers who yesterday
 Had left the beach as buoyantly as they.
 But these (they said) had sailed without a chart :
 Or failed to use it : and the human heart,
 By impulse ballasted, to escape the brine
 A special port must own, and chart divine.

III

The hemlock crooned for them its friendly strain ;
 And now they turned into a narrow lane
 Half hidden in the leafy underbrush :
 A fragrant avenue, whose sacred hush
 Was broken by the rumble of no wheel,
 No whirl of dust, no echo but the peal
 Of sporting bobolinks ; and where the moss
 A soft rich tapestry spread wide across ;

And all along, as far as eye could reach,
The birch and hazel boughs and silver beech
Threw grateful shade.

“This winding road,” said one,
“Will guide us to the summit ; and the sun,
Which hitherto hath flamed upon our way
With scorching heat, will here its fury stay,
While cooling breezes now will fan our cheek.
The way is sure : I heard my father speak
But yesterday of climbing this same path.”

The other lingered. “Greater beauty hath
The wilding thicket for my mood,” said he.
A dozen rods beyond this sumach-tree
Sharply the rocky cliff begins to rise.
Why toil we on ! ‘Reward of high emprise’
Is here at hand ! Behold ! the forest floor
Is thick with violets ! and here a door
Between the maple-trunks seems opening wide,
Inviting us to enter. In !” he cried,
And caught his comrade’s arm, and sought
To lure him.

But his zeal availed him naught.

“One moment, brother mine !” his comrade said.
“We started out the Overlook’s tall head
Intent to reach. Shall we be baffled here
By violets ? And yonder buds, I fear,
Are not the violets your haste has thought.
Those purple petals, delicately wrought,
With subtle juices, poisonous, are filled.
The deadly nightshade, if your eyes were skilled,

You would declare them ! And your open door
Is blocked with weed and briar. The forest floor
To which with thoughtless ardor you would haste,
Look you, is marshy ground — a miry waste."

"Enough !" perversely here the other cried.
"Give over ! Climb your mimic mountain-side !
Keep to your rugged pathway if you will :
The easiest road is soonest up the hill !
I shall stop here awhile, among the flowers,
And rest beneath the trees. In after hours
I 'll join you on the hilltop's lofty height.
I know not how I shall ascend, but night
Will not have fallen ere I join you. Go ! "

He waited not for answer : but the low
And sympathetic voice which oft had held
Him humbled with its music, rose and swelled,
And broke upon his ear in sweetest tone
Of friendship, begging, " Venture not alone ! "
In notes of warning, crying, " Do not go ! "

He waited not for answer : but the low
Wind murmured in his ear, and seemed to say :
" 'T were better, better, thoughtless youth, to stay !
To stay were better !" And as on he passed,
Still heedless, — with a deeper, warning blast,
" Regret is long," it sighed, " and short the day ! " —
It shouted ! and the woodland echoed, " Stay ! "

He waited not for answer : but a brood
Of white-winged doves flew over where he stood,
Their whirring pinions, as they sped their way,
Seeming to plead in chorus, " Stay, oh stay ! "

He waited not for answer : in he strode,
At once his friend forsaking and the road.
Mindless of all — of pain or torn attire —
He scrambled through the tangled weed and briar.
His soul was innocent of thought of ill ;
His heart, untried, was buoyant ; and his will
Was steadfast (so he thought) to do the right.
What matter where he wandered, if the night
Should not have fallen ere he gained the peak !

But surely, so it seemed, across his cheek,
The winds, which kissed him in the sun-lit way
Where he before had wandered ; which in play
Had sported with his hair and fanned his brow,
Were blowing searchingly and damply now.
And when he looked, and saw upon his hand
The stain of crimson drops — a purple brand
Where briars had punctured ; when he felt the pain,
At first forgot, now doubly felt again ;
And glancing down beheld the floss, the burrs
Thick fastened on him — shaken from the furze :
Backward he cast a lingering glance, and stood
As one irresolute. The ground was strewed
With stubble, crumbling stones, with last year's leaves,
A vision desolate. As one who grieves
For pleasures vanished, and would fain return,
So stood he now, and felt his pulses burn
With shame that he had wandered from the way.
Again he heard the wind. It seemed to say,
“ Return ! return ! you have not wandered far ! ”
Above his head, from out his golden car,

Apollo, smiling, shone with quickening beam.
Back wheeled the brood of irised doves, a-gleam
In every pinion with a golden glow ;
And circling in the air, above, below,
“ You have not wandered far,” they seemed to cry, —
“ Return ! return ! ” — then vanished in the sky.
Again he heard a voice — or seemed to hear.
Inward or outward, sounding in his ear
It startled him, as if before his eye
His friend deserted had come suddenly.

He listened — turned — had fled the dull abode,
And in a moment would have gained the road —
When yonder field again his eye besets,
The purple field — to him still violets !

“ I will not go,” he cried, — and on his knees
Down flung himself, — “ till I have gathered these ! ”

A stagnant pool was there. It did not flow,
But moved to right or left as wind might blow ;
And on its surface curling leaves careered
And severed lily-pads. Dim, withered, weird,
A ghostly hemlock-tree and ghastly larch
Above the margin reared a rugged arch,
Throwing a slanting shadow on the rank
Wet deadly nightshade growing on the bank.

And here the seeker after purple flowers
Stooped fondly down to while away the hours.

O hours — O days ! O rapid months and years !
O heights ungained ! O unavailing tears !

ADDITIONAL POEMS

III. MISCELLANEOUS

DAY UNTO DAY

Half the worth of man's existence
Is in life's unlooked-for gain.
Stirs the blood the most in steering
For the open unknown main.
Not to solve too soon all knowledge
Is the child's protective art ;
To attain new vision daily
Is eternal youth of heart.
Oh the beauty of the sunrise !
All my being, in its glow,
Rises, dances, wonders, worships ;
Yet to-morrow's sunrise-show
All my spirit is as eager
Till to-morrow to forego.

There 's a path on Grand Monadnock
I have left all unexplored.
I have scaled the cliffs around it ;
That its depths with bloom are stored
I am certain from the fragrance
Rising free when zephyrs blow ;

And in springtime, up its arches,
I have seen its maples glow.
But as yet I leave its secret
Undiscovered to my tread,
Like a chapter rare and golden
In a volume still unread ;
For I know when once I probe it
All its mystery will have fled.

There are secret paths of being
On the spirit's upward way,
Where, however much the marvel,
I still hesitate to stray.
Through life's daily vista gazing
I at times may catch a gleam
Of a more than earthly splendor ;—
And the sound as of a stream
Flowing calmly, grandly, purely
For the healing of my pain
May at intervals float downwards
To my dust-encumbered plain ;—
But to solve in full the secret
I 'm not certain would be gain.

WHEN YOUNG HEARTS LOVE

Bright are earth's days, and glad earth's years,
When young hearts love !

Many are joys, and few are fears,
When young hearts love !

Nor aught the wide earth round,
Unto its farthest bound,
May equal the intense
Unswerving vehemence

Of faith, of truth, of innocence, of tears,
When young hearts love !

Glad are the songs the angels sing,
In realms above !

Merry the mock-bird's caroling
In southern grove !

But ne'er may seraph chant
The Song of Covenant

That bindeth twain in one,
Or bird of southern sun

Repeat the soul's glad triumphing,
When young hearts love !

I FEEL THAT I KNOW HER

[1876]

I feel that I know her — we smile as we meet ;
We pass every day in the very same street,
She hurrying on — Heaven only knows where,
And I in pursuit of ambitions of air.

But who she may be, or the place of her home,
Or why through the city forced daily to roam,
Or married or single, a maiden or mother,
I 'm sure I don't know, any more than another.

Her eyes are a tender and beautiful blue ;
Her hair is the glossiest, goldenest hue ;
Her cheeks are as red as the roses in blow,—
And her heart is the garden, I feel, where they grow.

We never have spoken — we smile and go by ;
No greeting we utter, except with the eye :
Thank God she is modest, retiring, and true !—
And I am as modest and innocent too.

Full often I wonder her name and her station ;
I 've known from the first she is foreign by nation.
Her language — ah me ! would that language were
mine !
The land of her birth is the land of the Rhine.

O Germany ! home of sweet music and song !
My feet for thy vine-covered terraces long.
With Her for a guide through thy sun-purpled air,
How gladly my heart would go wandering there !

Some castle enthroned in thy hills there must be
That shelter would furnish for her and for me ;
Some crag overhanging some vine-embowered vale,
Where beauty might bloom and where love would not
fail.

Ah me ! such a spot it were pleasant to see,
And pleasanter far in its secret to be ! . . .
Stay, stay, O ye castles and day-dreams so fair ! —
Ye solace the heart, though but castles in air.

To-morrow I 'll meet her again ; and her smile
Will lighten life's roadway for many a mile.
That face in my dream, were life's journeying done,
Would lumine the pathway that leads to the sun.

The end of the roadway will come at the last.
Our eyes will be dull, and our smiles will have passed ;
And never, perhaps, will our voices be heard,
Nor ever our souls by those accents be stirred.

If true that we Somewhere attain to our own —
A realm of the heart, though the tongue be unknown —
We each will discern who the other may be :
I better know her and she better know me.

SWEETEST SONGS ARE NEVER SUNG

[1879]

I

The sweetest songs are never sung —
So the Poets say.

The tenderest chords are never strung ;
The merriest bells are never rung.

Well-a-day ! Well-a-day !

Let the Poets have their way —
Let them have their way !

All that sighing Minstrels sing can never me
dismay.

I can hear sweet bells go pealing — pealing joyously
to-day !

I can hear their silvery pealing, hear their merry
roundelay !

II

The fairest pearls are never found —
So Professors say.

The cheeriest trumpets never sound ;
The jauntiest vessels go aground.

Well-a-day ! Well-a-day !

Let Professors have their way —

Let them have their way !

All that dull Professors dream can never me
dismay.

I can see staunch ships come sailing — sailing proudly
up the bay !

I can see their masts all sun-lit on a sky of gold
and gray !

III

The saintliest prayer is never said —
So the Preachers say.

The daintiest board is never spread ;
The loveliest maid is never wed.

Well-a-day ! Well-a-day !

Let the Preachers have their way —
Let them have their way !

All that dullard Parsons dream can never me
dismay.

I know fate of lovely maidens — maidens fair and
sweet as day !

I the loveliest maid in thousands am to bear full
soon away !

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DREAM

Weary with toil at desk and board and book,
Gladly he dropped the crayon in its nook ;
But forcing to his lips a kindly smile,
And touching with soft hand his bell the while,
Said cheerfully, " The hour to close is nigh :
The setting sun drops down the western sky.
To-morrow, with new rest, will come new strength ;
We reach, perchance, untiring days at length ! "
Then rang again, and noting the sweet grace
And eagerness that lit each fair young face,
Dismissed them all into the evening air
With fervent blessing and an inward prayer.

The master's soul was sorrowful with doubt —
He whose triumphant faith should be so stout.
His pupils were so sluggish in the arts !
They had such feverish and impatient hearts !
" O soul ! " he said, " thy toil meets no return.
Life's cheeriest fires to blackened embers burn.
No adequate return," again he said,
And on the desk before him leaned his head.
The western windows opened to the blue ;
The sinking sun sent slanting shadows through :
He saw it not, nor heard the droning flies, —
But, lulled by Nature's opiate, closed his eyes.

He sees nor hears — his soul's tired pinions sweep
The shadowy vale of Death's twin-brother, Sleep.
All day, sad voices, sounding in his ear,
Had filled his spirit with a nameless fear.
Surely no followers, in this sunless land,
Would jeer and beckon him on every hand !
But ah ! ev'n here — though with no taunt or shout —
A myriad spirits thronged him round about ;
And with a soothing sound, as of a wind
Low breathing through the fragrant groves of Ind,
A single Angel — not of gloom, but light —
Said tenderly, " O King, thy wrongs recite ! "

" Alas, no King," the master said, " am I !
Even the crown of laurel-leaves is dry
Which in my younger years my sister wove,
Because at college eagerly I strove
And in the contests bore away the prize ! "
" Nay," said the Angel, " principalities,
States, empires, kingdoms, — these all pass away,
Forgotten even in an earthly day.
The crown immortal, the enduring throne,
These, to be steadfast, must be like thine own !
He who the light to one dark soul shall bring,
Among the sons of men is more than King.

" No word thou utterest, or good or ill,
But sounds forever, — wild or soft or shrill, —
Fast held within the vibrant air's embrace.
If words of thine shall brighten one sad face,

Thine accents ease a brother's heavy load,
Thy daily task reveal where truth is strowed,
Then rest content ! for there shall come a year,
In Time's rich flood, when back into thine ear
With ten-fold power thy words, or ill or good,
Shall speed with force that may not be withstood.
Then happy thou, if in thine ear shall ring
Words that shall crown thee servant, helper, king ! ”

The master smiled. His face with peace was lit
Where lately pain had overshadowed it.
“ But — sympathy ! ” he cried. “ Sweet spirit, stay !
Fain would I have some token by the way.
Daily I toil, nor meet a single smile
To ease the burden of one lonely mile.”
“ Awake ! ” the Angel answered, — “ thou art blind.”
He raised his head. “ Please, sir, we stayed behind, —
You fell asleep, — you would not wake for us ! ”
(Two little-ones beside his knee spoke thus.)
“ You love us, and try hard, — we know you do ;
And we have brought this little flower for you.”

OLD TIMOTHY JOHN

AND HIS FREQUENT REFRAIN, "POTATOES !
OH, POTATOES ! "

*Not all the heroes of the earth
Have gained their victory with the sword :
Not every child of noble birth
Has borne the escutcheon of a lord.*

*Full oft by gray and crumbling tomb,
By darkling waters' whirling flow,
May radiant asters beauteous bloom,
And fragrant-everlasting grow.*

Old Timothy John was a marvelous man,
And always a happy one, too, as he ran
With load upon load of potatoes.
"Six dollars, and health, and a hand-cart !" said he ;
"Oh, who in the city can wealthier be !
Potatoes — oh, potatoes ! "

The hush of the morning was stirred by his voice,
And ever till evening he offered a choice
Of several kinds of potatoes.

“I warrant them sound as a drum!” cried John—
“Though this is ‘a *hollow* comparison’!
Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

Nor ever a wife or a child had he.
Poor fellow! no weight ever lay on his knee

But a bushel or so of potatoes.

“My cart is my wife, and my child, and my friend.
To a *family carriage*,” said he, “I pretend !
Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

Full certainly Tim was a marvelous man,
And quite a philosopher, too, as he ran
Dispensing his stock of potatoes.

“A pox o’ your logic!” cried moralist John :
“Men soon would decease if they didn’t *live on*—
Potatoes ! Oh, potatoes !”

“An’ talk o’ your ‘Nature’ and ‘Physics’ !” said Tim,
While, staring, his audience looked at him
And then at his load of potatoes.

“Ho, ho!” he said, shoving his cart in the pause,
“Is n’t here an effect that’s ahead o’ the cause ?
Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

Not much of religion, perhaps, had Tim ;
But often his measure ran over the brim

As he sold to the poor their potatoes.

“Do n’t mind the odd nickel,” he also would say,
If he saw they were really ill able to pay.
“Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

The boys loved his coming ; and often they cried,
“ Oh, *please*, dear old Tim ! ”—so he gave them a ride
On the top of his load of potatoes.

The girls loved his coming ; and one, I know,
Once threw him a kiss — though *he* called it “ a
blow ! ”

“ Potatoes — oh, potatoes ! ”

Not much of a scholar, perhaps, was he,
Though seldom he passed in an “ *X* ” for a “ *V* ”

As he paid for a load of potatoes.

“ What *grammar* ! ” he cried, when the adding was
done ;

“ Two tens and a cypher do n’t make twenty-one !
Potatoes — oh, potatoes ! ”

No loud politician was honest old Tim,
Yet no one could purchase a vote of him

Though they bought his whole load of
potatoes.

“ I vote for the man the best fitted,” said he,
“ And *he* would n’t offer a bribe to me.

Potatoes — oh, potatoes ! ”

“ My choice is the man,” cried Timothy John,
“ Who ’ll help push the world’s great hand-cart on,
And none o’ your ‘ small potatoes.’ ”

The man who could purchase my vote when he would,
Would purchase my liberty, too, if he could.

Potatoes — oh, potatoes ! ”

Full certainly Tim was a marvelous man,
And always a happy one, too, as he ran
 With his lessening load of potatoes.
He sang from a heart overflowing and free,
And never mistrusted the universe he.
 “Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

But Timothy John, a few harvests ago,
Was noticed as steering unwontedly slow
 With his cargo of new potatoes.
“Next planting,” said he, “I may go under ground—
The biggest potato the hemisphere round !
 Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

Be sure that if Tim has indeed since found
The Garden where fruits are supposed to abound
 (Though never, perhaps, potatoes),
His resonant voice will be heard on high,
And in loftier strains than his own old cry,
 “Potatoes — oh, potatoes !”

MIDAS AND MUSAGETES

Up and down the world he goes,
Poor old fellow, lacking love !
Thinking his Parisian glove
And the pattern of his hose
All-sufficient to compel
Man and maid to speak him well.

Yes, he owns uncounted cash,
And his rents accrue him much.
He has had the Midas-touch,
Getting gold where others trash ;
Getting everything but play —
Even getting thin and gray.

And he really is n't bad —
Father much the same, you know,
Mother loving dross and show,
Ancestors half-ill, half-mad.
What could best Psychologist
Hope to grind from such a grist ?

Well I knew him as a boy :
Quick to see where he could get
Half a dime in youthful bet ;
Slow alone in finding joy —

Slow in action of the heart :
Ossified from very start.

Not till forty-five he wed.
Each felt each a lucky strike :
Terms, "Deposit cash alike" !
And at fifty she was dead —
Like their child that came between,
Crushed in soulless wealth's machine.

Met we on the street to-day ;
Dry his smile as long ago.
"Ah," he said ; "does fount still flow ?
Has your Muse begun to pay ?
Million each, for Muses Nine,
I can cash with single line !"

Said I, as he strode along,
"Dine with me to-night and see ;
Meet my rosy children three,
And peruse my latest song.
It and they will sing away
All the fever of your day."

Up and down the world he goes,
Visits Egypt and Japan,
Yet is not a happy man.
Lands of sun or lands of snows
Immaterial would be,
Could he sing my songs with me.

MOONLIGHT ON COLLEGE HILL

[Midsummer, 1879]

The hour is late :
Borne up by the weight
Of the sun as it sank through its western gate,
The moon has uprisen — full-orbed — sedate ; —

Has uprisen in glee,
From the eastern sea ;
And now with the stars holds jubilee
On the high wide floor of Immensity.

As the zephyrs soar,
Now higher, now lower,
“Come hither,” they call to me o'er and o'er,
“And wander with us on the reservoir ! ”

I wander — and gaze ;
And the light wind plays
With the level waters, and shivers the rays
That whirl on the surface like fugitive fays.

The undulant ground,
For miles around, —
Rock, river, and valley, and meadow, and mound, —
Is lit by the moon with light profound.

White radiance stains
Roofs, towers, and vanes,
And the moonlight gleams on the college panes
Like dew on the grass after summer rains.

The river below
Drifts pale as snow,
And over its current, as airs soft blow,
Broad ripples of silvery frost-work go.

Down miles of stream,—
A faint, far gleam,—
The harbor glows, till its waters seem
A jasper haze in a Patmian dream.

There bridges four,
Time-shaken and hoar,
Stand trembling in constant Traffic's roar,
And fade in the gloom of the farther shore.

There, too, on their trips
'Twixt the ferry-slips,
Go dragons with flame that flares and dips,—
Black shuttles in Trade's Apocalypse.

On the neighboring hill,—
Dim, lonely, and still,—
The powder-house echoes, with babblings shrill,
The wail of the plaintive whip-poor-will;

Still proudly it stands,
O'erlooking the lands
Where Washington toiled with his patriot bands
And threw up redoubts with his own white hands.

And here is the road
Where the steed once strode —
The moon still gleaming as then it glowed,
Though the tide of a hundred years has flowed —

On which Paul Revere,
In hope and fear,
Rode sounding aloud in the nation's ear
The knell of the British grenadier.

In my walk I stay,
And the scene survey
With a startled eye! for I hear a sway
As of hurrying hoof-beats far away!

But I listen again :
And my ears attain
No sound but the sudden and sad refrain,
And the patter and splash, of summer rain, —

As up from the west,
At the storm's behest,
Dark shadows rise wild o'er the landscape's breast,
Blotting moon, river, harbor, and all the rest.

COLLEGE HILL

One thought to-day, and one alone,
Has filled the circle of my mind :
And fairer sunbeam never shone
On eyes that long had wandered blind.
My heart to-day, with happy thrill,
Has been with thee, O College Hill !
With thee, with thee,
O College Hill !

The thunder of far Alpine Hills,
The storm-cloud of the Southern Seas,
The murmur of Spain's murmuring rills,—
Of these I 've dreamed, nor dreamed of ease.
But happiest thoughts my bosom fill
Whene'er I turn, O College Hill,
To thee, to thee,
O College Hill !

The room grows wide wherein I sit :
These narrow city walls expand :
I see again thy robin flit,
I see thy lawns on every hand,—
As green, as vocal, as the rill
That danced adown the sacred hill
Of Helicon,
O College Hill !

I see thy rising slopes, thy halls.
O Mother Earth, thou 'rt greener there !
And gentler be the rain that falls,
And sweeter, balmier be the air,
Forever, and forever still,
Upon thy breast, O College Hill !
On thy loved breast,
O College Hill !

Again I seem to see thy trees —
Thy silver-maple, mountain-ash ;
And dearer to my heart are these
Than Eastern vine or calabash !
I would not part with these, to till
By fair Euphrates, College Hill !
Or Gihon's edge,
O College Hill !

Again I see — more blest than all —
Full many a dear, remembered face ;
Again I hear the laugh, the call,
The cheer that rang from place to place :
The laugh and cheer that echo still
About thy halls, O College Hill,
Could I but hear,
O College Hill !

Again, in thought, I grasp the hand
Of comrades north and southward gone.

I follow them ! and in the land
Of Danube, Rhine, and Amazon
Again I feel the electric thrill
I knew on thee, O College Hill,
When hand clasped hand
On College Hill !

SONNETS

IN A COUNTRY BURIAL-GROUND

I lingered in the wayside home of rest,
Enchanted by the dream of peace it wore.
“G. L.—Eighteen”: the marble told no more
Which marked the turf-mound where I stood a
guest.
A hundred times, perchance, the robin’s nest
Has swung above his dust, while, o’er and o’er,
The timothy and sorrel locked the door
Which shuts him safe within his chamber blest.

Dear sleeper! was it ruthless War's alarm —
Its demon sacrifice — which in thine hour
Of blithesome strength compelled thee to the tomb ?
Or deed of love to save another's harm ?
Thou answerest not ! contented with thy bower
And ever wearing youth's transcendent bloom.

LOVE'S PREDICAMENT

In loving I do find such sweet employ
That more of love I make each hour my quest.
Yet presently I find this puzzling joy :
Am I Love's servitor — or Love's dear guest !
For while in strowing of my love I live,
No less of love remains to quench love's thirst ;
In truth, to strow is gain, for though I give,
Beseems more love is mine than mine at first.
Shall I then cease to love, and so give more ?
Deny myself, and let the world have all ?
So be it ! Self I 'll hide behind Love's door,—
Enswathe me fondly in Love's blindfold pall.
Oh, reckless venture ! for thus love I most,
And Love, thrice over, beams my smiling host.

PENALTY

What, little Golden-hair ! — upon my knee
Hast thou thus clambered and purloined a kiss ?
Must I from noonday's transient slumber-bliss
Be wakened by such artful villainy ?
And now thou smilest, hinting I should be
Joyed at thy stealing, and accept submiss
This theft of riches from fond love's abyss,
I all-unconscious ! Nay, a penalty !
Meet justice as transgressor ever heard
Do I impose on thee, thus flagrant caught.
Lift up, red lips ! receive this judgment-lore :
Lo ! for thy guilt I sound the ancient Word,
“ If from thy neighbor thou hast taken aught,
Fourfold in similar thou shalt restore.”

TO THE MUSE, AFTER SILENCE

Is yet my penance ended ? Will the Muse,
Against whom I offended, come once more
And dwell with me, and bless me as of yore ? —
Fondly, as erst, caress me ? radiant hues
Of gracious dawn throw o'er me ? magic dews
Of heavenly peace outpour me ? Oh, the store
Of loftiest soul-uplifting, when heart's door
Lies open, and Song's gifting lore ensues !

Then come to me, Divine One ! Lo, I kneel
Humbly where knelt I oft to know thy kiss.
How have I lived, not having touch of thee !
Even as sinking swimmers when they feel
Shore's sands beneath them, welcome I this bliss.
Thy strength supports — exalts — makes much
of me.

“ GOOD - BYE ”

I love the early meaning of the phrase —
It takes all sting of sadness from the word,
Leaving it blithe as carol of a bird
When golden twilight shuts the summer days.
Not “lost,” not “severed”— nay, not these the rays,
Like dying planet's, when “Good-bye” is heard ;
But “Good-be-with-ye!”— as when heavens are
stirred
To rosy tints invoking hearts of praise.
O love, dear love ! I bid you not farewell !
O friend departing, still we are akin !
O parent, wheresoe'er your pathway fares !
The night descends, but like a silver bell,
Reverberant eternal depths within,
Your sweet “Good-bye” unmeasured blessing bears.

REBIRTH

No recollection have I that I asked
To join this human caravan's sad toiling !
Yet erst I may have lived ; — 'neath sky as broiling
As this to-day, I may have wept or basked.
If so it were, and I were oft o'ertasked,
As now and here, and weary with earth's moiling, —
Love's loftiest works oft finding naught but
foiling, —
Could I my dread of birth renewed have masked ?
Yea, truly I believe I should have cried : —
“ Dear Mother Nature, thee I still will trust !
If thou hast need of me, still let me serve ! ”. . .
So, being here, my heart I have applied
To give Man's hopes and aims an upward thrust,
And charm dull Chaos into Beauty's curve.

ADDITIONAL POEMS

IV. TIMES AND SEASONS

FOR A BIRTHDAY

I keep no reckoning of the Years
As they pass by.

Life's seasons, with their smiles and tears,
Unnumbered fly.

So whether twenty be the score —
Or twenties two — or three — or four —
Still young am I !

But ah ! the Days are mine to hold
In loving fee,
And all their richness I am bold
To feel and see.

I hail each morn the added round,
And in their wealth to-day is found
This thought of thee !

Couldst thou but gain the good I pray,
My prayers might cease :
Thy Birthday would become a day
Of heart's release.

Not wealth nor honors wish I thee —
But loftier wish : that thou mayst be
With self at peace !

MERRY CHRISTMAS

In the roar of the world's busy hive
There is better for some than to "thrive."
There are songs in the chill winter air ;
They summon to do and to dare :—
" Peace on earth unto men of good will ! "
Above all the pain and the ill,
Merry Christmas !

O prophet who voiced the high dream
That had birth beside Galilee's stream !
The cross was not far from the song,—
And the thorns to high dreams still belong !
But the peace, the exuberant thrill
In the soul of all men of good will —
This makes Christmas !

" THEN FELT I LIKE SOME
WATCHER OF THE SKIES "

[Christmas, 1905]

A star, you say ?
Oh, yea !
A star of love and light
That rose in Nazareth that far-off time !
And, piercing earth's dull night,
Lured selfishness away, — made brotherhood sublime.

Before that day ?
Oh, yea !
Rare souls of inward flame
From age to age resplendent rose and gleamed,
Uplifting human aim,
Illumining with gold man's skies that grewsome
seemed.

Earth still is gray ?
Oh, yea !
But stars of love and life
Still rise wherever noble souls aspire,—
Transfiguring hate and strife,
Redeeming sordid earth with their exalting fire.

Strive we as they ?
Oh, yea !
Be each a luring orb,
With rays outflashing for poor human eyes,
Till love all wrong absorb,
And round the illumined earth Good Will indeed
arise.

BON VOYAGE

Over the Ocean ! The waters are blue ;
Joy to the ship, friend,— and blessing to you !
Days of deep calm on the wave are before you ;
Here is our hope that with health they may store you !

Over the Ocean to wonderful shores !
Voyager, voyager, marvelous doors
Swiftly shall open their lures to your sight,—
Dawnings of Italy, Syrian night ;
And never a door but our wishes pass through,
That good, as each swings, may be waiting for you !
Over the Ocean to wonderful lands !—
Blessing, O friend, from these stay-at-home hands
Follows you all the mysterious track,
Wishing you peace till you turn to come back.

Then with your vision adance with the glow
Of Germany's vineyards and Switzerland's snow,
Dear to our hearts shall again be your homing,
Rich with your harvest of rest and of roaming.

Voyager ! is there a voyage mysterious
Waiting ahead for us all — more imperious,
Vaster in might than all voyages here ?
Up with the anchor ! Forth valiantly steer !

DEATH OF MY FRIEND: THE OLD YEAR

[December 31, 1878]

What ! is that good Year dying ?—
The Year that has done so much for me ?
That so often has had a kind touch for me ?

Out in the cold there, dying ?—
Poor Year ! what a sorrowful end for thee !
But the host thou hast blest will stand friend
for thee !

What ! is never a mourner wailing ?—
Is the whole wide hemisphere rollicking ?
The world with a foundling frolicking ?

Old Year, there surely is wailing !—
My heart in its gratitude sings for thee !
My tongue this high requiem rings for thee !

EASTER

Beauty for ashes forever the planet puts on !
Blossoms and birdlings and brooks when the winter
is gone !

Rise, O my soul, to the Easter without and within ;
Flee from life's bareness and weakness and selfhood
and sin.

Live with the lavish forthspending of Nature at play ;
Fling on the path of thy fellows some luminous ray.
Sleep not while War and Oppression hold nations in
woe ;

Wide in the furrows of Man seed regenerate sow.
Listen ! the song of Humanity's springtime is near !
Join in the chorus sublime which the race yet shall
hear.

Laugh like the sun, sound the bobolink's jubilant
cry :

This shall be Easter full-bloom, fit for earth or for
sky.

ADDITIONAL POEMS

V. OCCASIONAL AND PERSONAL

IN GRATEFUL LOVE

[Dedication of a volume of poems, 1880]

To her whose sympathetic heart
 hath been my stay ;
Whose gentle hand hath guided me
 in all my way ;
Whose teachings in my childhood's hours
 were love alone ;
Whose arms of counsel now in youth
 are round me thrown ;
To her whose bright example is
 my guiding star ;
Whose love and faith are firmer than
 the hills afar ;
Whose presence hovers o'er me like
 some holy dove —
To HER these little songs are given,
 in grateful love.

TO MY CHILDREN ON THEIR MARRIAGE DAY

An old Italian story tells
 Of strife of town with town,
Where men of valor, for their homes,
 Laid life in honor down.

One morn a youth with head unclad,
 In scorn of helmet's guard,
Went forth to fiercest fight, and yet
 At night returned unscarred.

“ How dar’dst thou, youth, without thy mail,
 Adventure on the field ! ”—
“ My parent kissed me on the brow :
 That kiss was helm and shield ! ”

My children ! starting forth this hour
 On life’s untraveled ways,
Receive a parent’s kiss, as guard
 Against all evil days.

’T is magic on the field of right,
 A shield in all you do.

Accept it, — you remain unscath'd !
It means, " I trust in you ! "

'T is mighty too on plains of grief,
If burdens you endure.
Recall it, — sorrows lose their sting ;
It means, " My love is sure ! "

A kiss ? — a helmet and a shield !
I give it as we part ;
Oh, wear it as a charm and balm
'Gainst every earthly dart.

"LOOK BACK AT TIMES"

Each morn, along the dewy street,
As cityward I went,
"Part way" with me her eager feet
My little daughter bent.

Then, as I hastened from her side,
And fast the distance grew,
"Look back, look back at times !" she cried,
"I'll wave my hand to you ! "

Look back ? Ah, little did we think
Her phrase of childhood love
In after years my food and drink —
My soul's delight — would prove.

Unmeasuredly I now rejoice
In that blest earlier day ;
Nor need I now to hear her voice
Her summons to obey.

Yea, oft, my child, I backward look,—
Again those years are mine ;
Their pages are my Golden Book
With legends all divine.

Within its leaves, as in a dream,
Dear visions come and go.
Like walks in Fairyland they seem,
And ever sweeter grow.

Your baby hand still clasps my own,
Your kiss is on my cheek.
Though more than twenty years have flown
Their blessing grows not weak.

O vanished darling ! — still my pride ! —
Where roam your feet to-day ?
Forever young your years abide,
Though mine are flecked with gray.

Forever young abide her years —
Yea, all immortal she !
And still — the balm for all my fears —
She waves her hand to me.

OUT OF THE DISTANCE

[To one who sent me spring blossoms from the banks of the
Fox River, Illinois.—1890]

A hand from out of the distance reached,
And practiced what I had often preached.

That hand? It was the hand of one
Who often fair deeds of good hath done,
Though always with sweet unconscious grace,
Like violets in some greenwood place.

That distance? 'T were thousand miles if I ran—
But heart can o'erleap it in moment's span!
That distance? The soul is unmindful of space:
I dream I am there, and I see face to face.

That preaching? High word of Man's greatness it
taught;
And "Scatter fair blossoms!"—this bidding it brought.
And she the high message with fervor received,—
Then showed by her life she its Gospel believed!

Fair blossoms, I bless you! You bring to me peace.
Your fragrance, deep hid in my heart, shall not cease.
You bear me on wings to loved river and dell,
And the Voice of the Æons you whisper: "'T is well!"

O hand that out of the distance reached,
To me and my soul you have more than "preached."

UP HIGHER

[Acceptance of an invitation.—July, 1890]

Brother and Lover! whom I soon shall see :
Whose call I follow to learn liberty !
The noon-day terror calleth me on wings
To where the pine upon Monadnock sings.
I toil and sweat, as thou amid the hay,
But lack what gives the beauty to thy day —
Fragrance of clover, coolness in the deeps
Beneath low branches where the long grass creeps,
And most of all, the high horizon's rim,
Where cloudy summits, swathed in beauty, swim.

Spirit of Nature ! who to me art peace !
Happy when thou for me dost speak release,
And with the call from lowlands by the sea,
“Child, come up higher !” mak’st me once more free !

Yea, come up higher ! where the mountain’s crown
Is kissed by coolness as the night sweeps down ;
Where darting dragon-fly and cawing crow
Alike the wholesome life of Nature know, —
Unbound by sorrow, and unstained by wrongs
Which in the human world drown angels’ songs.

Ah, is it not a wretched daily plight
That with our scheming we hide heavenly light !
We deem our petty plans shall scale the skies ;—
We know not we are blinding our own eyes
To sights and sounds and spiritual worth
A myriad times surpassing those of earth.

Up higher, then, indeed ! And as my feet
Shall shake from them the dust of city street,
May mind and soul both likewise open fair
To hints of spirit's intellectual air.
Up higher not alone from sea to hill,
But higher to the highest heights of Will ;
Up higher to the peace beyond all strife,
Up higher to the true eternal life.

“SEVENTY”

[Written of JAMES VILA BLAKE, and printed and sent by friends
to many other friends, on his birthday.—1912]

Did some one say “Seventy”? — there’s surely mis-
counting!

Some joker with match sent the mercury mounting!
Hang Vila’s thermometer free from caloric,
Then fifty degrees would show all that’s historic.
Observe his spry gait, and his labors incessant:
A boy is thus active — old age is quiescent.
His ease of production shames motors and horses —
Four dramas a year and full forty discourses!
Young fellows of thirty, and even of twenty,
Are slow when compared with his swiftness and
plenty.

Those lines are not wrinkles — they’re records of
laughter

And symbols of friendships that came trooping after.
That crown is not snow which at times paints him
sober;

It’s blossoming clematis — best in October.
The “old” stop at home, and complain if in motion:
He leaps o’er the Rockies and swims o’er the ocean.
And just grasp his hand — does it feel at all icy?
His greeting, health, wit, are alike warm and spicy.

In fact, we must "play" he no longer is youthful
If now, while we celebrate, we would be truthful!
So why, after all, should we go through the motion
Of trying to magnetize only a notion?
To me it seems wiser to wish him some shirking,
With will to decrease his obsession for working.
Alas! such discretion comes only with aging,
And Vila each month starts afresh, with new paging!
The worst of it is, he will never be older;
Each added ten years sees him younger and bolder.
We simply "accept" him, his wisdom and folly,
To hang in our hearts as we hang Christmas holly:
The green is for gladness though earth is in bleak-
ness,
The berries for blessings bestowed on our weakness.
'T is thus we enshrine him — a blessing of bringing —
And vision him ever as childlike and singing.
Rare spirits like Vila from youthtime don't sever!
A sweet-hearted boy, he'll stay youthful forever.

SONNETS

MOTHER AND CHILD

Beneath the arbored grapevine's golden shade
We upward gazed together — she and I !
The clustered fruit seemed hung as on the sky ;
Beyond my utmost reach it glowed and swayed.
But she was tall as lovely, and her aid
Upbore me to the triumph. Lifted high,
I plucked the purple globes with gladsome cry,
And in her arms a feast of Eden made.
Perpetual o'er me since that childhood rare,
Dear gracious spirit vanished now afar,
Have swayed high fruits you showed to be desired ;
And if, ascending through celestial air,
My soul perchance at times has grasped a star,
'Twas still by you my upward aim was fired.

TO JAMES VILA BLAKE

[Printed, and sent by certain friends to many other friends, on
his birthday. — 1905]

Poet of lofty thought and artist sight,
Musician keen, whose ears catch dulcet notes,
Wise essayist, whose dullest page is bright,
Sane critic — seeing suns, ignoring motes ;

Preacher whose finest texts are writ in deeds,
Impelling nobleness in young and gray ;
Teacher whose art allures from listless meads
To heights where Song and Masque hold purest
sway ;

More than all these, rich lover and rare friend,
A thousand times sweet friend and lover true ! —
Small weight a world's admiring praise could lend
Of worth or grace to helper such as you.

Bays are not theirs alone whose deeds men laud ;
Wreaths greenest are still theirs whom few applaud.

IN QUEST TO KNOW

[Dedication of "The Complete Life," a small volume of moral essays, "To my friend and fellow-explorer, HAROLD EDDOWES, in grateful memory of many happy afternoon rambles, in summer and in winter (1884-1887), about Fox River valley, Illinois, during which — 'exploring Nature' both outwardly and inwardly — we talked not seldom of matters such as those treated of" in the book named.— 1888]

Oh, who shall say, my brother and my friend,—
Shall e'er again our feet together hie?
Oh, blest the woodlands, blest the peaceful sky
Where oft we two, light-hearted without end,
Our eager way, as children might, would wend!
The first spring flowers were those which met our
eye;
The hurrying, road-edged river running by
Ne'er failed us once — its every nook and bend
Fresh corners offered for our search and growth.
But years are flying — though they still are grand!
Be ready, friend! Ere long, perchance, we go
A farther road than any, where we both
May solve the mystery of some other land,
And wander joyous still, in quest To Know.

AT SPRUCE-TREE¹

[June, 1912]

How often, in my dreams of Treetop Land,
It rose an Eldorado — Land of Gold !
How often did my eager wish expand
To what the hearts that loved it had foretold !
And now within its woodlands I have roamed,
Its grassy, cloistered fields my feet have pressed ;
And while its wind-swept greenness round me
foamed,
Its giant spruce-tree has been made my nest.
What Eldorado of the passing years
E'er kept so well its promise to the soul !
How oft they brought but disappointing tears
In place of riches as the longed-for goal !
But here are beauty, freshness, life, and friends,
The richer ownership the more one spends.

¹ The name given by Colonel Daniel Crosby Pearson to his summer home in Candia, New Hampshire. The great, wide-spreading spruce-tree, with its hammock "nest," in front of the house, towers to a height of sixty feet or more.

GOD'S MARINERS

[Printed in *Unity*, Chicago, in celebration of its Twentieth
Birthday, March 3, 1898]

I

TWENTY YEARS PAST

A voyage such as vessel never knew,
Forth-starting on a cruise but dimly planned,
Provisioned meagrely, though ably manned,
And steadfast, as each heavenly beacon grew
Revealing whither — through horizons new !
A course with rocks and shoals on every hand,
And leading, some have feared, to No-Man's-
Land ! —

Though ever overhead the heavens were blue !
Yea, and God's winds have kissed the prow through
all,
Till crew and steersman feel the chilly air
Grow warm at last, and thus have strength to cope
With what may yet remain of tidal wall.
Far in the wake has faded Point Despair ;
Yonder, ahead, looms up the cape, Good Hope.

II

TWENTY YEARS TO COME

On shore — oh, hungry eyes with yearning gaze !

On shore — oh, eager and beseeching cries !

“ Sail on, you sailors, where high dreams arise,”

They call, “ and bring us to the better days !

We droop amid these sordid works and ways,

Where social greed, and hungering for the skies,

Becloud men’s sight to Being’s loftiest prize !

Sail on, till entered are God’s palm-fringed bays ! ”

Yea, gallant barque ! though twenty years you sail,

Add twenty more, and twenty more to that,

And hungry eyes on shore shall follow still !

For yet shall spirits faint, and faces pale,

And many a human dream fall prone and flat,

Ere we have fathomed truly God’s high will.

THE LOYAL TRAITOR

[To RAYMOND L. BRIDGMAN, author of the novel with the title, "Loyal Traitors."—1903]

"He means it well," with smile (or frown) they say,—
 "But, lack! he carries his 'reform' too far.
 One fails of wisdom who o'erleaps the bar
 Which prudent hands have stretched athwart the way.

A yard or two if you would run, you may :
 But if you race to lengths unpopular
 Your zeal offends. Who would his cause not jar,
 In reason's middle vantage-ground must stay."
 Oh, weak, who make a "middle ground" for Right !
 And doubly weak who, seeing valor wield
 The axe to topple Wrong, would dull the blade !
 Who loves his land, against that land must fight
 If she be tyrant ;— traitor if he yield
 While prostrate Liberty is bound and flayed.

REDEEM YOURSELF, O LAND !

[1903]

"For what avail the plow or sail,
 Or land or life, if freedom fail?"
 —Emerson.

America, you need fraternal sight !
 The man or State that lives to self alone
 Acquires no record on enduring stone
 Enwreathed with amaranth, with laurel dight.

Redeem yourself, O Land ! Remove the blight
You fasten on the brave, whose valiant tone
Through tyrant years has made their passion known
For liberty and larger love and right.
Alas, how meagre just to offer bread !—
And yet their wounds we still must strive to heal,
Must recompense with good their fearful ill.
Nor is it yet too late to crown their dead —
To snatch their banner from our chariot-wheel
And raise it upon Freedom's holy hill.

FIVE TIMES

[1898–1903]

Five times the sun his all-forgiving course
Has rounded since the strife and tears began.
It never entered darkest dream of man
That Liberty's sweet fountain at its source
So long should sullied be ; that Greed and Force
Should march victorious in Mercy's van,
Eclipse the strength the world rejoiced to scan,
And face us back to Russian and to Norse.
Alas ! we cannot raise the countless dead :
The mango moans above them. Yet take heart !
Their dream may yet irradiate their shore !
Or shall we still, with Freedom's spirit fled,
Refuse to recognize our holy part,
And in Repentance' face still shut the door ?

FINISHED

[Epilogue to a collection of poems. — December, 1880]

The year is finished — finished is the book.
The year was full of days, for good or ill.
It summoned us the fleeting hours to fill
With noble deeds. Long hours in dale and nook,
Where haunted pines their odorous needles shook,
Where fern and flower their dewy fragrance spill,
It gave for our delight. 'T is dying ! Still,
New years remain ! With fervor let us look
To make them really ours. — And you, my page !
As years are full with hours, so you with songs !
Oh, happy I if on your friendly way
You give, perchance, to eager youth and age
Some sight of largeness that to life belongs,
Some vision luring to a better day.

ADDITIONAL POEMS

VI. IN MEMORIAM

THE DEAD STUDENT¹

[1882]

I

With hearts enchain'd, and grateful, keen delight,
We gazed into the mid-September sky ; —
A new star, then un-named, intense and bright,
Rising, had met our eye.

Nightly we watched the fair, ascending orb,
More beautiful, more luminous each hour.
Never did other sun our souls absorb
With more supernal power.

Six fleeting months it gleamed — until its rise
Was looked for, and we grew to love its beams.
And then — as suddenly as the swift lightning flies,
As break the mountain streams —

¹ Wentworth Brooks Robbins, aged 19 : a student at Tufts College.

There loomed a cloud above the horizon's bar,
Which, while we groaning gazed into the night,
Enshrouded all the scene, and hid the star
Forever from our sight.

And hid the star? Yea, hid to outward gaze,
Though still in dreams it in full beauty glows,
Gleaming with richer, more resplendent rays
Than when it first arose.

II

Upon the surface only, wild with glee,
The white waves dance with all the winds that blow;
They only learn the secrets of the sea
Who fathom far below.

To those who knew him least, he may have seemed—
That comrade whom with many tears we mourn—
Like one who lived for sport; who never dreamed
He for aught else was born.

You never knew him as you should have known,
You who would judge him with a judgment thus:
A tenderer heart throbbed never than his own,
Nor more magnanimous.

And not in vain he lived, though brief his day.
His blithesome heart oft stole away our care;
Long in our lives his influence will stay,
Blessing us unaware.

III

The April morning wore a cloudy veil ;
 Across the mountain-tops gray vapors passed.
Weeping for him who prostrate lay and pale,
 The sleet and rain fell fast.

But with the noon the sky no longer grieved,
 The sunlit earth grew luminous and bright ;
Even the upheaved sod — for him upheaved —
 Grew golden in the light.

With slow sad steps we bore him to the grave,
 While on his pall the flowers and smilax lay ;
And wept we that a soul like his should have
 No longer life than they.

But beautiful it was, if he must die,
 To reach his rest in such a time and scene,
Mourned by such tender love, and brought to lie
 Beneath such sky serene.

And there we left him — where he oft had roved
 To greet at morn each mountain's purple dome ;
In constant sight of the dear hills he loved,
 His happy summer home.¹

¹ Keene, New Hampshire; Grand Monadnock and other summits rising a few miles away.

LEWIS G. JANES¹

[Read at the Memorial Service at the Ole Bull Studio House,
Cambridge, September 8, 1901]

Not waiting for the evening's shades to swell,
Sometimes at noon she rings her curfew-bell —
The solveless Mother of whose "hours" we prate,
Though in her years is neither soon nor late.
But though his dust lies now amid the flowers,
His thought persists — his living words are ours.

His living words are ours, and show the way
To Freedom and to earth's more glorious day ;
His potent words — with manly impulse fraught,
And pointing to the ever-widening *Ought* !
His solvent words — with Nature's meaning rife,
And throbbing with the true eternal life.

He asked the universe for what it had,
And held its tenure to be good, not bad.
In ferns and fauna he read things To Be ;
The stars held strains of secret minstrelsy.
He loved her much, and Nature did not mock,
But fed him manna even from the rock.

But higher yet he sought his loftier theme,
And roved in earth's best groves of Academe.

¹ 1844-1901. President of various scientific, ethical, and literary societies; author, lecturer, philosopher.

The wisdom of the Past he made his own —
Whatever man had dreamed, or guessed, or known,
And with the scholar's grace and sage's art
Laid bare its promise for the human heart.

Around his board he gathered with delight
The dusky face with Eastern radiance bright,
The traveled seer from Europe's groaning lands,
The Islander outstretching hopeful hands ;
And from the lips of each and all he heard
The world's one searching, all-embracing Word.

That Word was Freedom ! and he sought to trace
How freedom might be won for all the race.
For him no freedom was while some were bound ;
Freedom meant Freedom all the world around.
So, foremost still, his Word to us comes down :—
Freedom for all men, white or black or brown.

And not alone his living word was high :
His word was lofty when he came to die.
He spoke of beauty, whispered of the light,
And full of courage entered on the Night,
Content to know whatever lay before
Would be in line with Nature's finest store.

His dying word — “ Still beauty reigns on earth :
Let beauty also in the soul have birth ! ” .
His dying word, so like his own rich life,
That sought the noble, shunned the needless strife,
And by his public voice and private pen
Brought strength and beauty to the lives of men.

O steadfast soul ! in whatsoever star
Or realm of ether thou to-day afar
Dost wander, — or unseen beside us stand, —
The world still hears thine accents of command ;
And as a ripple widens o'er the sea,
So yet shall spread thy faithful ministry.

ADONIRAM JUDSON PATTERSON

1827 - 1909

Faithful follower of good,
Freeman when the world was slave ;
Modest where self-seekers stood,

Only first in strife to save ! —
Luminous, to seeing eye,
Soars thy spirit to the sky.

Weep we not that thou hast won
Rest at last from body's thrall ;
Thus serenely sinks the sun,

Answering to Nature's call.
Soul and sun ! what warmth and light
Wrought ye both, ere came the night !

Feeble to thy sight and hand
Were the prizes men might show ;
Only proud wast thou to stand
Where Truth's summons called to go.
Humbly one of kindred pride
Lays this laurel at thy side.

ADDITIONAL POEMS

VII. EARLIER PIECES

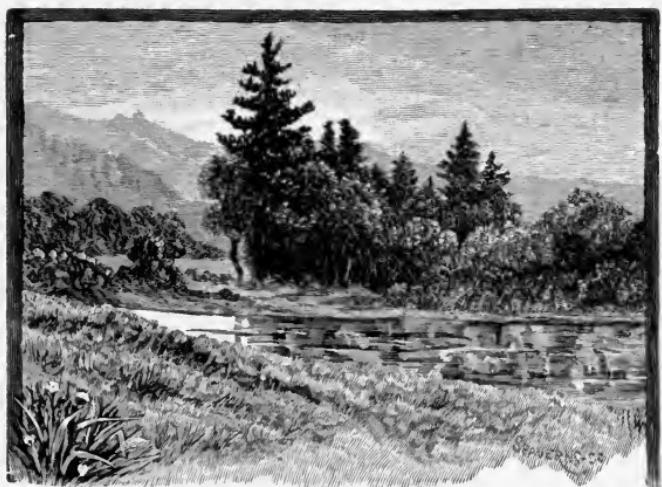
CONCORD RIVER

My soul to-day,
O river, wandering seaward,
Is with thee !
From out the gray
Of Memory — hurrying leeward —
Radiantly,
As in a dream
Of friends dead or at a distance,
I behold
Your fair, faint gleam ;
And for your glad existence,—
Gay with gold
As where there waits
Eternal sunrise Yonder
At the gates
Of sapphire, — I
A grateful prayer do ponder,
Tremblingly.

O strange, O mystic stream !
Slow winding to the sea :
Oft in my nightly dream
Your vision comes to me !
Within my slumber I behold your placid wave,
And look with joy on your unruffled sweep ;
And with the answering smile I crave
You smile within my sleep.

Oft in my light-keeled boat,
Your tremulous wave afloat,
Your bosom me has borne,
Your strength my weakness known,
Till wearying care, and scorn,
And every fear, were flown ;
Until, with spell most magical,
You in my bosom quelled
All phantoms tragical,
And pain and doubt dispelled,
As when a cloud upon your breast removes,
And down the sun shines on the wave it loves.

Full many a placid hour
Beside your edge I 've strayed,
And many a sylvan bower
Has Fancy there displayed.
Below your historic Battle-Bridge you wander through
a plain,
There 'mid your wide lone meadow-lands to turn and
turn again ;



“ Full many a placid hour
Beside your edge I ‘ve strayed,
And many a sylvan bower
Has Fancy there displayed.”

— *Facing page 292*

But in your narrower, shadier course, where trees
your waves o'erhang

And dewy verdure thickly lies as where the Sirens
sang, —

Here many a grateful leafy dell
My feet of yore have found,
Nor deemed you had a parallel
The wide earth round.

Full oft beside your vernal banks,
What time might come Spring's jocund charioteer,
Have I been mute observer of the thanks
With which you knew earth's natal glories near —
Rippling in gratitude when you should learn
Had come the blushing violet and fern.

Plashing your emerald edge
With joyous dew,
You kissed with welcoming pledge
Earth's offerings new.

And I have seen your greeting to the stars,
As one by one they flecked your tranquil floor —
Venus, and red-browed Mars,
And countless myriads more,
Gleaming amid the eternal height,
The golden diadem of Night.
And when unto her full might grow
The round red harvest moon,
The one above and one below
Made midnight mimic noon :

For mirrored wondrously upon your tide,
Limned by a brush unseen your bosom o'er,
Stood every spark amid heaven's arches wide,
And every moonlit marvel of the shore :
Each tree and twig, each fluttering leaf, was there,
As truly represented as in air :
And scarce the line the wave and land between,
So perfect was the juncture, could by eye be seen.

Amid the verdant foliage at your side,
Unknown to all the world but you and me,
A countless classic host have lived and died,
And linger now not e'en in memory.
My books indeed have taught
Of many a fruitful land and holy age ;
Yet to my soul with wisdom full as fraught
Has been your springtime foliage !
For I have looked through you as through a portal,
And dreamed I met the gaze of the Immortal !

WHITHER, YE STATELY SHIPS

Whither, ye stately ships,
In grandeur do ye ride ?

Oh, do ye never tremble, dreading dire eclipse,
As silently ye glide
Athwart the Ocean's lips ?

Far o'er the widening seas
Ye sail to beauteous lands :

Alike 'mid Behring's ice and Sunda's odorous ease
Obedient to the hands
Which bend you to the breeze.

Proudly your course ye take
Where ne'er before went keel,

Or follow in the track where thirsty myriads slake
The intense desire they feel
For far-off loved-ones' sake.

Gibraltar's frowning rocks
May shadow you in gloom ;

But when ye have outridden the vengeful Equinox,
Ye find deep harbor-room
Where ne'er come tempest-shocks.

Outward indeed ye fly,
And farthest oceans trace ;

But if ye once shall gain the sought Sicilian sky,
Homeward ye then may race
In gladdest ecstasy.

Never a cargo bear
Of shame or crime, O ships !
Better that whirlwind rend, or treacherous waves
insnare,
Than that Contagion's lips
Should taint your heaven-free air.

But far as oceans stretch,
Or Austral islands rise,
Wing ye love's message to the wild despairing wretch
Who, fainting, seeks the prize
Unfound unless ye fetch.

Scorched amid Central Zone,
Crushed by Antarctic ice,
Ever, O stately ships, your nobler birthright own,
Nor plunge, a sacrifice,
With but a gurgling groan !

Back ! bring our sons safe back !
Our brothers, lovers, friends !
We had not let them sail with you your venturous
track,
But that our faith extends
Beyond a drifting wrack !

Our faith in you, O ships,
Uphold and justify !
And firm as boatman builds, and staunch as he
equips,
Sail ye an Argosy
That meets nor dreads eclipse !

THE SORROWING WIND

I sat awaiting one who did not come.
Against my window the November rain
Pattered a weird and pitiful refrain :
Never dear Mother Nature's voice is dumb.
Drearly, as in penitence, the wind
Murmured a Miserere — had it sinned ?
Had it been boisterous upon the deep ?
Had it been cruel — tossing ships about,
And sending sailors to their watery sleep ?
With aimless fury and disastrous rout
Had it been leveling dim forest aisles,
And devastating fields for miles and miles ?

A CANE FROM GETHSEMANE

A simple cane is here—a pilgrim staff :
 Yet on its polished face,
In quaintly graven Hebrew paragraph,
 A sacred name I trace.

“Gethsemane : Mount Olivet.” The phrase
 Bespeaks the favored earth
Where, ages since, — in unremembered days, —
 Its sacred tree had birth.

A traveler brought it — fragrant with the air
 Of that clear Syrian sky.

“Here, friend,” he said, “the staff is yours ; you care
 For such things more than I.”

I hold it in my hand, as here I sit,
 And musing close my eye ;
And far and fast doth subtle Fancy flit,
 Imagination fly.

In shorn Gethsemane, to this far day,
 Is shown the grotto wild
Where Abraham prepared the wood to slay
 Isaac his first-born child.

Here David, harp in hand, from yonder hills
 His native Bethlehem nigh,
Oft wandered with his sheep, the rippling rills
 And quiet waters by,

And rested, sweeping with his hand the strings
Melodious with praise,
Laying his head upon these rootlets' rings,
Lit by the sun's last rays.

Here Solomon had come, with timbrels, flutes,
And cymbals clashing loud ;
With solemn sackbuts, fifes, and silvery lutes,
In royal garments proud ;

With damsels rich in dyes from Tyrian shore ;
Playing at games of chance ;
Laughing to see upon the leafy floor
The Jewish maidens dance.

Here Philip's son, great Alexander, came,
His hands with slaughter wet,
And bowed himself before the jeweled flame
Of priestly coronet.

The god of Macedon was Mars the Red,
His empire on increase :
The God of Shiloh's olives overhead
Here gently whispered, "Peace ! "

Here Jesus, Joseph's son, a mightier king,
Weighed down with woes of men,
Came praying he perchance their lives might bring
To God and Heaven again.

Here too, while his disciples slept, he sweat
As it were drops of blood —

His brow, in agony, already wet
With Friday's crimson flood.

And here the Angel came, in raiment white,
To strengthen him and bless,
Making a Bethel of the darksome night,
And joy of his distress.

Here Judas, jeering, brought the priestly crowd
With lanterns, swords, and staves —
His thirty silver pieces jingling loud
And murmuring "Paupers' graves!"

Here Titus came, and with his army vast
Uprooted every tree.
Thy glory then, Jerusalem, was past!
And thine, Gethsemane!

But ere that fatal hour, the cane I hold
Was plucked from off its tree,
And down through monkish cloisters dim and old
At last has come to me.

This very bough, perhaps, its portion gave
For Abraham's altar fire,
When sadly building — deeming naught could save —
His first-born's funeral-pyre.

This very bough — who knows? — the bough may be
That sheltered David's lambs;
Beneath which Solomon, the Wise, in glee
Made proverb-epigrams;

That Alexander bowed beneath ; that he
Of Nazareth sought for prayer ;
That worn disciples brushed ; that treachery
Sought out and made a snare. . . .

O sacred bough ! from thy long history
Some lesson I would learn !
Would that from thee some heavenly mystery
Within my soul might burn !

THE VIOLET

I met within the wilding wood
A violet nodding in a dell :
Its bud was blue, its stalk was green ;
And now when I would tell
The story of that simple flower
There rises to my view
A perfect picture of the scene —
The nodding violet's stalk of green,
Its flower of lovely blue.
In all the world was never seen
A bluer blue, a greener green.

I met within the city street
A darling little blue-eyed girl :
Her eye was bright, her step was light,
And on her brow a curl
Of fairest, purest gold hung free.

With smiles she looked at me !
Her heart, dear child ! was light as air,
As free as air from sorrow. There
Could never, surely, be
A step more light, an eye more blue,
A soul more innocent or true.

A few short days — alas ! alas !
I met her in the street no more.
I know not how it came to pass,
But knocking at my door
One evening as I writing sat,
Approached a little boy —
Her brother — who beside my knee
Bewailed and wept so piteously
That it would needs employ
A power beyond my tenderest art
To hush the turbulence of his heart.

I clasped him in my close embrace :
His burning cheeks with tears were wet.
To mine he raised his mournful face —
Ah ! ne'er shall I forget
The hope, the doubt, the keen despair
That mantled in his eye.
I still can hear him importune :
“ Oh, — say she will be better soon !
Tell me she will not die ! ”
My heart could not deny the boon :
“ Ah, yes ! ” I said — “ be better soon.”

I hastened to the wilding wood,
And sought the violet in the dell,
Whose bud was blue, whose stalk was green.

I surely need not tell
Upon whose breast, within whose hand,
The flower was shortly seen.
She on its petals looked, and smiled ;
Upon the bud of blue, poor child !
And on the stalk of green.
And then she closed her bright blue eyes,
And flew afar to Paradise.

Upon her breast, within her hand,
The violet still was seen —
The violet with its bud of blue,
Its stalk of brilliant green —
When robed for Fairyland she lay.

I doubt not when in love
The angels met her, and her eyes
Beheld the blooms of Paradise,
Were none more fair above !
Nor there in heaven might angels view
A soul than hers more pure and true.

ALL AS ONE

[Early fragment]

Not greatly distant from the sounding sea
Beside whose edge I frequent wend my way,
An ancient forest, deep and silent, lies—
Reputed home of nymph and woodland fay.
Verdant primeval arches rise o'erhead,
And hide the earth from sunlight and the sky ;
And drooping mosses hang from every limb—
Gauze curtains swaying in the east wind's sigh.

The hemlock and the pine are brothers here ;
Their branches they in mutual friendship wield,
And when the winter blasts and snows appear,
Each strives the other from the storms to shield.
Oh, would that men might here a lesson learn,
And all as one their strength and faith compare,
That when were nigh the fitful storms of life
The strong the burdens of the weak might bear.

L'ENVOI : METEORS

I sit in the gloom
Of my evening room
On the hilltop high, and gaze on the tomb
Of darkness which covers earth's beauty and bloom.

O'er the river's gray track
Rise the hillslopes black —
Like peddlers, each holding a house for a pack,
Or like Atlas of old, with the town on their back.

In the northern sky,
From their throne on high,
Fair meteors flash on the wondering eye,
And fall into darkness, and fail, and die :

Fall suddenly down,
With the gleam of a crown,
To fade in the mists and the shadows brown
Which hazily hang over meadow and town.

The villagers sleep :
Over valley and steep
Not a household light breaks the darkness deep :
The pale stars only their vigils keep.

But look ! through the night
(Where a meteor bright
Just vanishing seemed to fall in its flight)
There shines in a window a welcoming light ! —

A scintillant glare,
Rich, luminous, rare, —
As if when the meteor vanished in air
It charmed a new star into radiance there !

— O soul of mine !
When the Angel Divine
Shall summon thee swift to a region benign, —
Shall summon thee swift, and thou follow his sign, —

Thou wouldst not ask more
Than some heart on life's shore
Grow bright with a gleam of thy vanishing lore —
Grow bright with a lustre undreamed of before.

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